

Instead of launching a duplicative investigation with no ability to compel the AWB to cooperate, I encouraged the Australian Government and the AWB to cooperate with the IIC and the Cole inquiry whose findings have just been released.

The Cole report has left me with a few lingering questions to which I plan to find some answers. My subcommittee is continuing its review of the Cole report to determine whether U.S. affiliates of the AWB should be held accountable here in the United States.

But the most important question to ask in the wake of the Cole report's findings is whether American wheat farmers have suffered as a result of the fraud and abuse on the part of the monopolistic AWB. I am introducing legislation today to address that question, and if we find proof of harm, to make our farmers whole.

I would like to introduce today the Australian Wheat Board Accountability Act of 2006. The purpose of this legislation is just that: to hold the Australian Wheat Board accountable for their illegal, deceitful, trade-distorting actions. The bill directs the Office of U.S. Trade Representative to use its authority to investigate and combat these practices.

This legislation is a simple bill with two distinct elements. First, the bill directs USTR to investigate whether U.S. wheat farmers have suffered economic damage due to the actions of the Australian Wheat Board. Second, if we find harm, we seek compensation.

I have spoken many times on this floor about the great experiences I have had meeting with farmers of my State. I just finished traveling to all 87 counties in Minnesota this year, and I will be the first to tell this body that some of the most enriching visits I had took place with farmers. Those who make a living by working the land, Mr. President. Those who produce the food and fiber of our Nation and have done so for generations. Those who contribute so much to the social fabric we hold so dear.

And they don't ask for much in return. They didn't ask me to come to the floor today or to introduce this legislation. All they ask is that when it comes to trade, everyone ought to play by the same rules. They want a level playing field because they know they can compete with anyone in a fair global market.

The fact is the Australian Wheat Board hasn't been playing by the rules. The Cole report has proven that the AWB unfairly monopolized wheat exports to Iraq under the Oil for Food Program. By paying Saddam and his henchmen millions in illegal kickbacks, they may have distorted the wheat market to the detriment of the honest, hard-working farmers across Minnesota and the United States while they reaped the benefits of a corrupt regime for their own ill-gotten gain.

I intend to find out if AWB's criminal actions hurt the bottom lines of our

farmers, and that is what part one of this legislation does.

Part two of this legislation is about compensation. Under this bill, if it is found that our wheat farmers have suffered economic damage, USTR will seek appropriate compensation to make our farmers whole. If we cannot come to a negotiated settlement, we will impose duties on certain Australian goods until we collect a sum equivalent to the financial loss brought on by the AWB. Either way, I want any possibility of financial loss looked at, and if proven, I want compensation for our farmers.

Mr. President, I realize this is the final week of the 109th Congress and that this legislation probably doesn't make the priority list for passage this week. You can bet I will be back here again when we reconvene in January offering this bill in the 110th Congress. We owe it to our farmers to further investigate AWB's actions, and this legislation will make that happen.

PANDEMIC AND ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I wanted to give my thanks to Senators BURR and KENNEDY for working with me and my esteemed colleagues, Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU, to pass a bill that together makes a difference to the health and well-being of Americans in the event of a public health emergency—natural or man-made. We saw in Hurricane Katrina that local, State, and Federal governments were not adequately prepared for a situation that could have been much worse. Also, much of the public was not prepared and could not get out of harm's way because of issues of capacity and trust. Regardless of our preparation then, it is clear that the government and the public must become better prepared now. We must come up with a disaster preparedness and response system which does a better job of knowing what is happening not in government cubicles but on the ground, which is able to prioritize the allocation and delivery of finite resources, and which utilizes our cumulative man and woman-power to work together to get anything that needs to be done, done.

This is not a perfect bill, but S. 3678, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, does improve the ability of the Federal Government to coordinate response to emergencies and disasters. It centralizes command and control of Federal public health and medical emergency response and for the first time ever, lists the needs of at-risk individuals in emergencies as a national preparedness goal.

Considering the needs of at-risk populations in public health emergencies and disasters is perhaps the most vital way to reduce casualties when treatment options are limited, environmental exposures place the public at risk and or when evacuation is nec-

essary to get people out of harm's way. In disasters, the burden of casualties almost always fall on populations with unequal ability to protect themselves. These populations are termed special-needs populations, at-risk populations or at-risk individuals. They are populations who possess unique needs or limitations and may as a result not be able to receive, comprehend, or respond to public health messaging during emergencies in the way that best support their safety and well-being. They are populations that may not be able to fully address their own preparedness for, response to, and recovery from public health emergencies. At-risk individuals include the elderly, children, pregnant women, the poor, disabled, individuals with limited English proficiency, and others. Forty million Americans are over 65 years old, a number that will reach 71 million by 2030. There are over 70 million children under age 18. There are approximately 7 million pregnant women. Fourteen percent of Americans are limited in activity due to a chronic health condition.

I thank Senators BURR and KENNEDY for having the vision to address at-risk individuals in S. 3678 but also the willingness to work with Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and me to make the language concerning at-risk individuals even stronger. The Lieberman-Cochran amendment, which has been incorporated into the final S. 3678 managers' package, publicly designates a person with a budget, who would ideally be called the Director Office of At-Risk Individuals, to oversee the implementation of the national preparedness goal concerning at-risk individuals; assist Federal agencies responsible with planning for, responding to, and recovering from public health emergencies in addressing the needs of at-risk individuals; provide guidance to State and local public health grant recipients as to how to incorporate the needs of at-risk individuals in emergency preparedness and response strategies; and develop and disseminate best principles and practices regarding outreach to and care of at-risk individuals in public health emergencies.

Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and I believe that a new director of At-Risk Individuals will be a great resource to the Assistant Secretary in keeping the needs of at-risk individuals central as the Secretary works to implement the Nation's disaster preparedness goals across the Federal agencies. In the past, the Nation has not done enough to break down the artificial silos between the agencies charged with the health aspects of disaster planning and response, which is vital for the public in general but particularly to at-risk individuals in disasters. At-risk individuals are not monolithic, and their identities change depending upon the type, location, and character of disasters. Yet they are many, and their existence poses consistent challenges which must be addressed. These groups include people

with disabilities, the elderly, non-English speakers, children, the poor, and the homeless. We understand that there is often significant overlap between at-risk groups. Individuals who are homeless, for example, are also poor and often disabled.

Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and I also believe that a new director of At-Risk Individuals will also be a great resource to States, which will now have to incorporate the needs of at-risk individuals into disaster plans as a condition of receiving Federal disaster preparedness funding. The process by which the needs of at-risk individuals are incorporated into State, let alone Federal disaster plans is not obvious and will require both accumulation and dissemination of expertise. The committee envisions the Office of At-Risk Individuals as an ideal repository and resource for information in this regard. This information can be gathered from entities already doing excellent work in the field. Within HHS, this includes the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability, and Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Within DHS, this includes the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Preparedness Directorate, and the Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities. Within the community, this includes organizations like C.A.R.D. in California and the Kellogg Foundation's Redefining Readiness Projects. Within Academia, this includes work done by the Center for Civilian Bio-defense Studies in Maryland and the New York Academy of Medicine. Nationally, this includes the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness, Initiative, the Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Finally, Senators COCHRAN, OBAMA, KOHL, and LANDRIEU and I believe that a new Director of At-Risk Individuals can be an important source of funding and support for a community engagement process focused on organizing ordinary citizens to prepare and to respond to public health emergencies. The public is not a passive entity and must be viewed as a valuable partner in disaster planning and response. Communities are better able, for example, to identify the location of their special needs populations, to communicate with them, and to intervene in ways that are consistent with the reality of people's lives. In addition, during disasters, the governmental response is often delayed, and people must be able to protect themselves why they wait for help. Last of all, community-derived public health emergency plans must be coordinated with local, State and Federal disaster plans and the new Office of At-Risk Individuals can fund opportunities to bring all key stakeholders together.

The AARP, the American Red Cross, United Cerebral Palsy, and the Amer-

ican Academy of Pediatrics have all endorsed this important amendment. These are groups that most would agree know much about at-risk individuals, disaster preparedness and response.

In short, the process of addressing the needs of at-risk individuals during public health emergencies is a necessary and immense task that must be overseen. A new Director of At-Risk Individuals with a budget of up to \$5 million as specified in S. 3678 will provide the focus, expertise, personnel, and institutional memory to assure that the at-risk language in S. 3678 is followed and that the Government, in planning for and responding to emergencies, keeps the needs of all Americans, front and center.

I thank Senators BURR and KENNEDY again for writing and passing S. 3678 and being open to the Lieberman-Cochran language.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR STEPHEN G. PURDY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Major Stephen G. Purdy, Jr., of the U.S. Air Force for the outstanding contributions he rendered this year while serving as a legislative fellow on my staff. Stephen will soon complete his Capitol Hill fellowship, and it is my hope that he has benefited as much from this experience as I have benefited from having him on my staff.

In the course of Stephen's military career, he has served rotations in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisitions, Space and Nuclear Programs. While working at the Space and Missile Systems Center, Stephen was the Atlas V Program chief engineer. Additionally, Stephen has served as the Joint Counterair Acquisition Manager at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisitions, Global Power Directorate. Finally, before joining my office Stephen was posted to the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Legislative Liaison.

To my great benefit, Stephen joined my office in a year when the Air Force was searching for a new mission for Cannon Air Force base in New Mexico. Cannon was originally targeted for closure on the Department of Defense's, DOD, Base Closure and Realignment, BRAC, list. However, the BRAC Commission ultimately found that the DOD "substantially deviated" on several BRAC selection criteria and required that DOD shall seek a new mission for Cannon. Stephen's experience proved critical in our successful efforts to secure a new mission for Cannon. I have no doubt that his tireless work and dedication were important to the Air Force's decision to relocate the Air Force Special Operation Command's 16th Special Operations Wing to Cannon, which has ensured that Cannon will continue to play an important role in securing our Nation.

I must also thank Stephen's family for enduring his many late nights at work. So to Wendy, Stephen's wife, and the Purdy children, Taylor and Holly, I say thank you. And without question, you can be extremely proud of Stephen's dedication to our country.

Finally, Mr. President, I give my heartfelt thanks to Stephen for his service. His can-do attitude and tireless work ethic were infectious. His willingness to tackle issues which were new to him and to embrace the goals I've set for my staff on behalf of both the men and women of the Armed Forces and the citizens of New Mexico were truly commendable. I have no doubt that as Stephen continues his military career he will achieve great things for both the U.S. Air Force and his country, and I wish him the very best of luck in all his future endeavors.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATION 2006

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate briefly turned to H.R. 5384, the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2007. This bill appropriates about \$98 billion in spending, an amount that is approximately \$4.9 billion over the administration's budget request, and \$4.7 billion more than the House-passed bill. Although we were unable to complete work on H.R. 5384, I want to explain my objections to the passage of this bill in its current form.

I believe that some Federal involvement is necessary to assist low-income families under the food stamp program, and that we should ensure that our farmers stay out of the red, and to this end, many of the programs under the Agriculture Department are worthwhile and I support their funding. I know that many of my colleagues have spoken before the Senate about the economic struggles of America's farmers. But as Congress looks ahead toward legislating a new farm bill in the near future, next year in fact, we once again conform to the practice of diverting taxpayer dollars into an array of special interest pork projects which have not been authorized or requested by the Administration.

Let's take a look at some of the earmarks that are in this bill and accompanying report:

\$3.5 million for fruit fly control in Texas, which was not in the administration's budget request.

\$400,000 for codling moth research in Kerneysville, WVA, which was not in the administration's budget request.

\$200,000 for research into the genetic enhancement of barley in Aberdeen, ID, which was not in the administration's budget request.

\$300,000 for grass research in Burns, OR which was not in the administration's budget request.

\$750,000 to the Denali Commission to improve solid waste disposal sites in Alaska, which was not in the administration's budget request.

\$200,000 for the Utah State University's Space Dynamics Laboratory to