

project has even grown to include a partnership with the UNLV Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering.

I am pleased to welcome 12 local teams as well as 50 teams from across the country and the world to Las Vegas and to UNLV. I hope they will be able to enjoy everything Las Vegas has to offer. It is also important to recognize the contributions of the parents, teachers, mentors, volunteers, and sponsors for this event. Without their support, I am certain this event would not be possible.

With the backing of the entire Las Vegas community, I am certain that the FIRST Robotics, FRC, Regional Competition will be an outstanding success. Mr. President, I wish all the participants success in the competition and in the future.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I regret that I was unable to vote the evening of March 5 on the confirmation of the nomination of Carl J. Artman, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

I wish to address this confirmation so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as U.S. Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 59, on the confirmation of the nomination of Carl J. Artman, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior, I would have supported the confirmation of Mr. Artman. My vote would not have altered the outcome of this confirmation.

IN HONOR OF VACLAV HAVEL

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today I wish to join my colleagues from the Helsinki Commission in commemorating the founding of the Charter 77 movement 30 years ago, and praising Vaclav Havel, one of Charter 77's first spokesmen and the first post-Communist President of Czechoslovakia.

Many aspects of Vaclav Havel's biography are well known. His advanced formal education was limited by the Communist regime because of his family's pre-World War II cultural and economic status. By the 1960s, he was working in theater and writing plays. But by 1969, the Communist regime had deemed him "subversive," and his passport was confiscated.

In 1977, he took the daring step of joining two others—Jan Patocka and Jiri Hajek—in becoming the first spokesmen for the newly established "Charter 77" movement. This group sought to compel the Czechoslovak Government to abide by the international human rights commitments it had freely undertaken, including the Helsinki Final Act.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Vaclav Havel was repeatedly imprisoned because of his human rights work. His longest period of imprisonment was 4½ years,

1979–1983, for subversion. After this, Havel was given the opportunity to emigrate but, courageously, he chose to stay in Czechoslovakia. By February 1989, Havel had come to symbolize a growing human rights and democratic movement in Czechoslovakia and, that year, the Helsinki Commission nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Remarkably, in November 1989, the repressive machinery of the Communist regime—a regime that for five decades had persecuted and even murdered its own citizens—collapsed in what has come to be known as the "Velvet Revolution."

To understand just how repressive the former regime was—and therefore how stunning its seemingly sudden demise was—it may be instructive to recall the first measures of the post-Communist leadership, introduced in the heady days of late 1989 and early 1990. First and foremost, all known political prisoners were released. Marxism-Leninism was removed as a required course from all school curricula. Borders were opened for thousands of people who had previously been prohibited from traveling freely. Control over the People's Militia was transferred from the party to the Government. The Federal Assembly passed a resolution condemning the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia. Approximately 40 Ambassadors representing the Czechoslovak Communist regime were recalled. Newly appointed Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier announced that the "temporary" 1968 agreement allowing Soviet troops to remain in Czechoslovakia was invalid because it was agreed to under duress and that Soviet troops would withdraw from the country. The Politburo announced it would end the nomenklatura system of reserving certain jobs for party functionaries. The secret police was abolished. Alexander Dubcek, leader of the 1968 Prague Spring, was elected Chairman of the Federal Assembly on December 28 and, a day later, Vaclav Havel was voted to replace Gustav Husak. In February 1990, Vaclav Havel addressed a joint session of Congress.

Charter 77 paved the way for all of these things, and more: for Czechoslovakia's first free and fair elections since 1946, for the normalization of trade relations between our two countries, and for the Czech Republic's accession to NATO. Not surprisingly, the work of Charter 77 continues to inspire, as is evidenced by the adoption of the name "Charter 97" by human rights activists in Belarus, who are still working to bring to their own country a measure of democracy and respect for human rights that Czechs have now enjoyed for some years.

I am therefore pleased to recognize the 30th anniversary of the Charter 77 movement and to join others in honoring Vaclav Havel who remains, to this day, the conscience of the global community.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, in accordance with rule XXVI.2. of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the rules of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, as unanimously adopted by the committee on January 31, 2007.

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

[Adopted in executive session, January 31, 2007]

RULE 1. REGULAR MEETING DATE FOR COMMITTEE

The regular meeting day for the Committee to transact its business shall be the last Tuesday in each month that the Senate is in Session; except that if the Committee has met at any time during the month prior to the last Tuesday of the month, the regular meeting of the Committee may be canceled at the discretion of the Chairman.

RULE 2. COMMITTEE

[a] Investigations. No investigation shall be initiated by the Committee unless the Senate, or the full Committee, or the Chairman and Ranking Member have specifically authorized such investigation.

[b] Hearings. No hearing of the Committee shall be scheduled outside the District of Columbia except by agreement between the Chairman of the Committee and the Ranking Member of the Committee or by a majority vote of the Committee.

[c] Confidential testimony. No confidential testimony taken or confidential material presented at an executive session of the Committee or any report of the proceedings of such executive session shall be made public either in whole or in part or by way of summary, unless specifically authorized by the Chairman of the Committee and the Ranking Member of the Committee or by a majority vote of the Committee.

[d] Interrogation of witnesses. Committee interrogation of a witness shall be conducted only by members of the Committee or such professional staff as is authorized by the Chairman or the Ranking Member of the Committee.

[e] Prior notice of markup sessions. No session of the Committee or a Subcommittee for marking up any measure shall be held unless [1] each member of the Committee or the Subcommittee, as the case may be, has been notified in writing of the date, time, and place of such session and has been furnished a copy of the measure to be considered at least 3 business days prior to the commencement of such session, or [2] the Chairman of the Committee or Subcommittee determines that exigent circumstances exist requiring that the session be held sooner.

[f] Prior notice of first degree amendments. It shall not be in order for the Committee or a Subcommittee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee or Subcommittee unless fifty written copies of such amendment have been delivered to the office of the Committee at least 2 business days prior to the meeting. It shall be in order, without prior notice, for a Senator to offer a motion to strike a single section of any measure under consideration. Such a motion to strike a section of the