

In addition to funding operations and capital improvements, the Amtrak bill also addresses the congestion experienced on so many of the system's routes. By law, Amtrak passenger trains have the right of way over private freight trains, but this preference is often ignored. The bill the Senate passed today permits the Surface Transportation Board to assess fines against non-compliant freight railroads and to distribute damages to Amtrak. Congestion has increased in recent years, especially along the Northeast Corridor, and this provision should lead to fewer and shorter delays for passengers.

Finally, let us celebrate a piece of good Rhode Island news—I have been informed that the escalators in the Providence train station, which have been broken and covered with dust since early 2005, are scheduled to be reopened and in service by the week of November 12.

I congratulate Senators FRANK LAUTENBERG of New Jersey and TRENT LOTT of Mississippi on the passage of this critical piece of legislation. I also want to recognize the contributions of Rhode Island's own Senator JACK REED, who has been a strong and constant advocate for Amtrak. The new resources and clear development plan outlined in this bill reaffirm Congress's commitment to passenger rail service in the United States.

MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

In the early hours of October 19, 2007, a 28-year-old man was shot at allegedly because of his sexual orientation. The victim and a friend left a gay bar in Midtown Atlanta, GA, for a gas station down the street at about 3 a.m. At that time, a sport utility vehicle with three men inside pulled into the gas station's parking lot. One of the vehicle's passengers was allegedly intoxicated and complaining to customers about the number of gay people at the gas station, using antigay epithets. Some of the man's behavior is caught on surveillance tapes at the station. The victim and his friend began to walk back to the bar after a short stay at the gas station and were followed by the men in the vehicle. As they walked by the bar, the man who appeared intoxicated shot at them four or five times, grazing the victim with a bullet that had ricocheted off the building. While Georgia does not have a hate crime law, the shooting is being investigated as an antigay incident.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Matthew Shepard Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

FIRES OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 2007

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, over the past 2 weeks, residents of San Bernardino, San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside, and Santa Barbara counties in southern California have faced some of the most horrific wildland fires in California's recorded history. At one point, as many as 1 million Californians were forced from their homes and communities by flames driven by Santa Ana winds of up to 100 miles per hour.

To date, 14 people have lost their lives, almost 3,000 structures, two-thirds of them homes, have been destroyed and more than 500,000 acres have burned. Over 100 people have been injured, some seriously. The consequences to people's lives will be long term, and we will do everything we can to bring comfort to victims and regeneration to affected communities.

Throughout these fires, which are only now being subdued, thousands of firefighters, mostly Californians, but some from other States, have been on the front lines working around the clock to defeat the fires. They have been tireless and fearless. We owe these California firefighters, and those who traveled across the country, our deepest thanks and appreciation. Whether it was saving the lives of people in the path of the flames, or making a stand to protect a neighborhood or a whole town, these brave men and women were there selflessly doing their duty. CalFire, the California National Guard, county and local fire agencies worked tirelessly to get the job done.

Thankfully, there has been no loss of firefighter lives, though several of our firefighters were injured, and to them I send my best wishes for a full recovery.

I hope that today we all can recognize our firefighters' valor and steadfastness in the face of the threat. We must also commit ourselves to standing up for their health and welfare as they face health challenges that sometimes last a lifetime. They do a very difficult job and we must do everything possible to assure they have all the support necessary so that they can continue to be there when the next threat presents itself.

SOMALIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I have come to this floor many times over the years to urge increased U.S. attention and resources to Somalia. Meanwhile, the United States and the international community at large have continued to respond sporadically and

clumsily to the steady deterioration of Somalia's security, humanitarian, and political situations. In January, I said that we had only a very limited window to establish the conditions necessary for stability in Somalia and the volatile Horn of Africa region, but I fear that opportunity may soon be lost. Events over the past few days suggest that strong but inclusive leadership is needed now if Somalia is to avoid the worst descent into chaos of its tumultuous history.

This weekend saw a massive setback in Somalia's security and humanitarian situation as a fresh outbreak of fighting which aid workers describe as the worst violence in months—forced tens of thousands more Somalis from their homes in Mogadishu. Most of these people are seeking refuge in communities whose coping capacities are already at the breaking point due to the strain of providing food, water, protection, shelter, and basic services to more than 300,000 existing internally displaced persons. Some of the newly displaced have fled to areas where there is little or no access by humanitarian agencies.

Forty of these aid organizations that are operating against all odds in Somalia released a statement yesterday highlighting the dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation and their increasing inability to effectively respond due to security and access constraints. They are calling on the international community and all parties to the present conflict to demonstrate a commitment to protect civilians, to facilitate the delivery of aid, and to respect humanitarian space and the safety of humanitarian workers. I want to take this moment to honor the courageous individuals and their sponsoring organizations for their persistent service to the innocent civilians most affected by the ongoing instability in Somalia and to echo their appeal for concerted action to support their work and the broader objective of peace for Somalia.

Amidst this dark backdrop there is a glimmer of hope for progress. On Monday, the embattled Foreign Minister of Somalia's fragile transitional federal government, Ali Mohamed Gedi, resigned amid feverish political infighting. Since its formation 3 years ago, the TFG has suffered from a lack of public legitimacy due to its inability to effectively represent and provide security and services to the Somali people. The appointment of a new Prime Minister is likely to be the last chance for this transitional government to restore some credibility and move forward with political reconciliation. I encourage all parties to seize this opportunity for progress towards a solution to the country's deepening crisis.

In January, I warned that without concerted international and national action, Somalia could deteriorate into what it has been since the early 1990s—a haven for terrorists and warlords and a source of crippling instability in a

critical region. But as tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea rise once again, the ongoing humanitarian needs of civilians in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia reach international attention, and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan stands on extremely fragile ground, I fear that our failure to protect civilians, defeat extremists, and build conditions for stability in Somalia could result in an even more disastrous outcome with consequences that extend far beyond the porous borders of this besieged nation. We cannot afford to squander this chance for progress towards peace.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF DREW GILPIN FAUST

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to draw the attention of my colleagues to the inauguration earlier this month of Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust as the 28th president of Harvard University.

Unfortunately, because of my recent surgery, I was not able to attend the ceremony, but I read with great interest the eloquent and inspiring address of Dr. Faust at that ceremony.

Dr. Faust, an historian of the Civil War and former dean of the Radcliffe Institute, made history herself by becoming the first woman to serve as president of this outstanding university.

Others who spoke on this occasion included our Massachusetts Governor, Deval Patrick, historian John Hope Franklin, University of Pennsylvania president Amy Gutmann, where Dr. Faust spent much of her brilliant career, and author Tony Morrison.

Present also were three of Dr. Faust's distinguished predecessors, Derek Bok, Neil Rudenstine, and Lawrence Summers, as well as distinguished representatives of other major colleges and universities in the United States and throughout the world.

Last month, Senator DOLE, Congressman PETRI, Congressman FRANK, Congressman CAPUANO, and I had the privilege of hosting a reception in the Senate's Mansfield Room to honor and welcome Dr. Faust. A number of our colleagues attended as well, and we all look forward to working with Dr. Faust, especially on higher education issues, in the years ahead.

Dr. Faust is obviously an excellent choice by Harvard. She grew up in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and attended Concord Academy in Massachusetts. After earning her BA from Bryn Mawr College, she continued her education at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in American civilization and served on the faculty there for 26 years, earning wide renown as a leading historian of the Civil War and the American South. In 2001 she became the first dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, and was appointed as Harvard's Abraham Lincoln Professor of History.

Her scholarship has been focused on the past, but almost from the beginning she has been committed as well to solving the problems of the present and making the world a better place for the future.

As a child in Virginia, she was appalled by the racism in her own community. At the age of nine, she wrote a letter to President Eisenhower opposing segregation.

In high school, she went to Eastern Europe one summer and spent weekends volunteering in a program to help the poor. She was elected senior class president and was so widely respected that the school's new headmaster sought her advice about the school.

In her freshman year at Bryn Mawr College, she was outraged when peaceful protesters against segregation in Selma were brutally clubbed and gassed by the police—so she skipped her midterm exams to go there and join the protest.

At the University of Pennsylvania, she dedicated much of her time and energy to the cause of women in academic life. She chaired the university's Women's Studies Program, and worked skillfully to see that women candidates for the faculty were considered fully and fairly.

Through it all, Dr. Faust won well-deserved renown for her scholarship. She became one of the Nation's preeminent historians of the South, bringing new light to topics such as plantation agriculture and the life of southern intellectuals. Her landmark 1996 book, "Mothers of Invention," made her the first to demonstrate that women had a significant impact on the outcome of the Civil War. For that pioneering study, she received the Francis Parkman Prize for the year's best work of history.

For the past 7 years, Dr. Faust has been the "mother of invention" at the Radcliffe Institute, skillfully guiding Radcliffe's transformation into one of the Nation's foremost research centers for established and emerging scholars in all disciplines, and still maintaining its special and long-standing role in the study of women, gender and society.

As Dr. Faust has said, our shared enterprise now, as people connected to Harvard, is to make the future of this extraordinary university even more remarkable than its past. And with the distinguished leadership of Dr. Faust, there is no doubt it will be.

I still remember the old inscription on the Dexter Gate in Harvard Yard: "Enter to grow in wisdom. Depart to serve better thy country and all mankind." I am sure President Faust will give new power to these words in our day and generation.

I wish President Faust well as she assumes this extraordinary responsibility, and I believe all of us in Congress will be interested in her eloquent and inspiring address on the historic occasion of her inauguration. It is an auspicious new beginning for Harvard,

and I ask unanimous consent that her address be printed in the RECORD.

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

UNLEASHING OUR MOST AMBITIOUS IMAGININGS
(Inaugural Address of President Drew Gilpin Faust as President of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 12, 2007)

I stand honored by your trust, inspired by your charge. I am grateful to the Governing Boards for their confidence, and I thank all of you for gathering in these festival rites. I am indebted to my three predecessors, sitting behind me, for joining me today. But I am grateful to them for much more—for all that they have given to Harvard and for what each of them has generously given to me—advice, wisdom, support. I am touched by the greetings from staff, faculty, students, alumni, universities, from our honorable Governor, and from the remarkable John Hope Franklin, who has both lived and written history. I am grateful to the community leaders from Boston and Cambridge who have come to welcome their new neighbor. I am a little stunned to see almost every person I am related to on earth sitting in the front rows. And I would like to offer a special greeting of my own to my teachers who are here—teachers from grade school, high school, college and graduate school—who taught me to love learning and the institutions that nurture it.

We gather for a celebration a bit different from our June traditions. Commencement is an annual rite of passage for thousands of graduates; today marks a rite of passage for the University. As at Commencement, we don robes that mark our ties to the most ancient traditions of scholarship. On this occasion, however, our procession includes not just our Harvard community, but scholars—220 of them—representing universities and colleges from across the country and around the world. I welcome and thank our visitors, for their presence reminds us that what we do here today, and what we do at Harvard every day, links us to universities and societies around the globe.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Today we mark new beginnings by gathering in solidarity; we celebrate our community and its creativity; we commit ourselves to Harvard and all it represents in a new chapter of its distinguished history. Like a congregation at a wedding, you signify by your presence a pledge of support for this marriage of a new president to a venerable institution. As our colleagues in anthropology understand so well, rituals have meanings and purposes; they are intended to arouse emotions and channel intentions. In ritual, as the poet Thomas Lynch has written, "We act out things we cannot put into words." But now my task is in fact to put some of this ceremony into words, to capture our meanings and purposes.

Inaugural speeches are a peculiar genre. They are by definition pronouncements by individuals who don't yet know what they are talking about. Or, we might more charitably dub them expressions of hope unchastened by the rod of experience.

A number of inaugural veterans—both orators and auditors—have proffered advice, including unanimous agreement that my talk must be shorter than Charles William Eliot's—which ran to about an hour and a half. Often inaugural addresses contain lists—of a new president's specific goals or programs. But lists seem too constraining when I think of what today should mean; they seem a way of limiting rather than unleashing our most ambitious imaginings, our profoundest commitments.