The American Red Cross is implementing increased donor recruitment initiatives to help offset these trends including:

1. Scheduling more blood drives, as well as expanding the hours of existing blood drives;

2. Pilot-testing an Internet-based system to enable people to schedule blood donation appointment online;

3. Utilizing aggressive telemarketing and direct-mail campaigns to encourage previous blood donors to come back and schedule an appointment;

4. Paying for advertising and working with the news media in markets nationwide to get this critical message to potential donors;

5. Establishing a pilot ''urban blood donor center'' in Chicago to make it easier for people working in downtown areas to donate blood during the business day.

We are excited about these new efforts and hope that they will allow us to reach more prospective donors than ever before. However, the fact remains that we need help now to address the current blood shortage. I want to encourage everyone, from students returning to school, to people who haven't donated blood in a while to call 1–800–GIVE–LIFE today to schedule an appointment. We need you now. Don't forget, 1–800–GIVE–LIFE.

THE HAGUE CONVENTION ON PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, countless Americans will welcome the news that the Senate last night ratified the Treaty of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. This Treaty was approved by our Foreign Relations Committee in April.

In addition, the Senate also approved unanimous final passage of the Intercountry Adoption Implementation Act—which was likewise unanimously approved by the House of Representatives this past Monday.

I offered the Intercountry Adoption Implementation act a year ago—along with Senator LANDRIEU, because this legislation will provide, for the first time, a rational structure for intercountry adoption.

Mr. President, this significant legislation is intended to build some accountability into agencies that provide intercountry adoption services in the United States while strengthening the hand of the Secretary of State in ensuring that U.S. adoption agencies engage in an ethical manner to find homes for children.

In addition, Mr. President, both the Senate and the House agreed that sole responsibility for implementing the requirements of the Hague Convention, rests with the U.S. Secretary of State. Although, some advocated early on, a role for various government agencies, I believe that spreading responsibility among various agencies would have undermined the effective implementation of the Hague Convention.

Mr. President, passage of this significant legislation would not have been possible without the assistance from several talented people in both the Senate and House.

In particular, of course, I extend my sincere appreciation to Senator LANDRIEU (and her staff). Senator LANDRIEU and I have worked together on issues of adoption since her arrival in the Senate in 1997.

Senator BIDEN, ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee, has been exceedingly helpful (as has his staff) in finalizing the Intercountry Adoption Implementation Act.

It's always a privilege to work with our colleagues in the House—and especially regarding passage of this Act. The Honorable BILL GILMAN, the distinguished chairman of the House International Relations Committee; Congressman SAM GEJDENSON, ranking minority member on the House International Relations; Congressmen DAVE CAMP and WILLIAM DELAHUNT; and, last but by no means least, my good friend, Congressman RICHARD BURR—who offered the original Senate companion bill in the House.

From my own Senate family, the former legislative counsel for the Foreign Relations Committee (now counsel for Senate Intelligence), Patricia McNerney; and Michele DeKonty, the very special lady who, in every sense, my right-hand lady.

Mr. President, this legislation now goes to President Clinton. I am hopeful that ratification and implementation of the Hague Convention will encourage more intercountry adoptions, while protecting all who are involved in the process.

DELAYS IN SENATE CONFIRMATION OF JUDICIAL NOMINEES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I regret to report to the Senate that the last confirmation hearing for federal judges held by the Judiciary Committee was in July. Throughout August and now into the third week in September, there have been no additional hearings held or even noticed. By contrast, in 1992, the last year of the Bush Administration, a Democratic majority in the Senate held three confirmation hearings in August and September and continued to work to confirm judges up to and including the last day of the session.

I also regret that the Judiciary Committee's inaction on judicial nominations has led to Senators object to Senate committees continuing to meet on other matters when the Senate is in session. The matter is most acute with regard to the numerous vacancies on our Courts of Appeals and the qualified women and men who have been stalled before this Committee.

This Judiciary Committee has reported only 3 nominees to the Courts of Appeals all year. We have held hearings without even including a nominee to the Courts of Appeals and denied a Committee vote to two outstanding nominees who succeeded in getting hearings. I certainly understand the frustration of those Senators who know that Roger Gregory, Helene White, Bonnie Campell and others should be considered by this Committee and voted on by the Senate without additional delay.

Currently there remain more judiciary vacancies than there were when Congress adjourned in 1995. We have not even kept up with attrition over that last 5 years. Earlier this week, Senator HATCH joined with me and a dozen other Senators to introduce the Federal Judgeship Act of 2000. That legislation incorporates recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States to authorize 70 judgeships in addition to the 64 current vacancies within the federal judiciary. If those additional judgeships were taken into account, the so-called ''vacancy rate'' would be over 13 percent with over 130 vacancies.

We can make quick progress when we want to do so. The last group of nominees considered by the Judiciary Committee included three who were nominated on a Friday, had their hearing the next week and were approved and reported to the Senate within 6 days.

By contrast, we still have pending without a hearing qualified nominees like Judge Helene White of Michigan. She has been held hostage for over 45 months without a hearing. She is the record holder for a judicial nominee who has had to wait the longest for a hearing and her wait continues without explanation to this day.

We still have pending before the Committee, the nomination of Bonnie Campbell to the Eighth Circuit. Ms. Campbell had her hearing last May, but the Committee refuses to consider her nomination, vote her up or vote her down. Instead, there is the equivalent of an anonymous and unexplained secret hold. Bonnie Campbell is a distinguished lawyer, public servant and law enforcement officer. She was the Attorney General for the State of Iowa and the Director of the Violence Against Women Office at the United States Department of Justice. And she enjoys the full support of both of her home State Senators, Senator HARKIN and Senator GRASSLEY. I commend Senator HARKIN for his remarks on Ms. Campbell's nomination earlier today. I understand his frustration and believe that this Senate's failure to act on this highly qualified nominee is without justification.

We still have pending without a hearing the nomination of Roger Gregory of Virginia and Judge James Wynn of North Carolina to the Fourth Circuit. Were either of these highly-qualified jurists confirmed by the Senate, we would be finally acting to allow a qualified African American to sit on that Court for the first time. We still have pending before the Committee the nomination of Enrique Moreno to the Fifth Circuit. He is the latest in a succession of outstanding Hispanic nominees by President Clinton to that Court, but he too is not being considered by the Committee or the Senate.

Let me return briefly to the nomination of Roger Gregory. The Chairman of the Judiciary Committee indicated

in his recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that the reason Roger Gregory would not be confirmed is because the Administration refused to consult with his home State Senators. In fact, this nomination is supported by both Virginia Senators, both Senator WARNER and Senator ROBB. Indeed, Senator ROBB made a forceful statement on behalf of this just a few days ago. In response to that assertion in the Wall Street Journal, the Counsel to the President sent a letter to the editors of that paper that corrected the misstatement. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that letter be included in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

The Chairman also suggested that it was too late in the session to move on these nominations. In addition to the recent examples I already noted, nominees now on the Senate calendar awaiting action after being before the Judiciary Committee for less than one week, there is the example of the hearing held last week by the Government Affairs Committee on two District of Columbia Superior Court judges, who one was nominated on May 1 and the other was nominated on June 26. Another example of the ability of the Senate to act is the September 8 confirmation of James E. Baker to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Of course, the Republican candidate for the presidency has said that nominations should be acted upon within 60 days. Of the 42 judicial nominations currently pending, 33 have been pending from 60 days to 4 years without final action, including Roger Gregory.

Finally, there is the contrasting example of responsible action by the Democratic majority in 1992 on the nomination of Timothy Lewis to the Third Circuit. Tim Lewis was nominated on September 17. By September 17, Roger Gregory had already been pending for well over 60 days. Tim Lewis was accorded a hearing on September 24, was voted on by the Committee on October 7, and was confirmed by the Senate on October 8, before it adjourned for rest of the campaign before the presidential election that year.

I note for the Senate that there continue to be multiple vacancies on the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, Tenth and District of Columbia Circuits. With 22 current vacancies, our appellate courts have nearly half of the total judicial emergency vacancies in the federal court system. I note that the vacancy rate for our Courts of Appeals is more than 11 percent nationwide. If we were to take into account the additional appellate judgeships included in the Hatch-Leahy Federal Judgeship Act of 2000 and requested by the Judicial Conference to handle their increased workloads, the vacancy rate would be 16 percent.

Pending before the Committee are a dozen nominees to the Federal Courts of Appeals who are awaiting a hearing. They include Judge Helene White of Michigan, who is now the longest pending judicial nomination at over 45 months without even a hearing; Barry Goode, whose nomination to the Ninth Circuit was the subject of numerous statements by Senator FEINSTEIN and who has been pending for over two years; Allen Snyder, another well-respected and highly-qualified nominee who got a hearing but no Committee vote although he received the highest rating from the ABA, enjoys the full support of his home state Senators, and had his hearing on May 10, 2000. There are and have been many others, including a number of qualified minority nominees whom I have been speaking about throughout the year, including Kathleen McCree Lewis of Michigan, Enrique Moreno of Texas and Roger Gregory of Virginia.

Let us compare to the year 1992, in which a Democratic majority in the Senate confirmed 11 Court of Appeals nominees during a Republican president's last year in office among the 66 judicial confirmations for the year. In 1992, the Committee held 15 hearings—twice as many as this Committee has found time to hold this year. The Judiciary Committee has held hearings on only five Court of Appeals nominees all year and has refused to vote on two of those. In the last 10 weeks of the 1992 session, the Committee held four hearings and all of the nominees who had hearings then were confirmed before adjournment. In the last 10 weeks of the 1992 session, we confirmed 32 judicial nominations.

What is most significant about the recent trend of judicial vacancies and vacancy rates is that the vacancies that existed in 1993, even after the creation of 85 new judgeships in 1990, had been cut almost in half in 1994, when the rate was reduced to 7.4 percent with 63 vacancies at the end of the 103rd Congress. We continued to make progress even into 1995. In fact, the vacancy rate was lowered to 5.8 percent after the 1995 session, and before the partisan attack on federal judges began in earnest in 1996 and 1997.

Progress in the reduction of judicial vacancies was reversed in 1996, when Congress adjourned leaving 64 vacancies, and in 1997, when Congress adjourned leaving 80 vacancies and a 9.5 percent vacancy rate. No one was happier than I that the Senate was able to make progress in 1998 toward reducing the vacancy rate. I praised Senator HATCH for his effort. Unfortunately, the vacancies have since grown again.

During Republican control it has taken two-year periods for the Senate to match the one-year total of 101 judges confirmed in 1994, when we were on course to end the vacancies gap. Nominees like Judge Helene White, Barry Goode, Judge Legrome Davis, and J. Rich Leonard, deserve to be treated with dignity and dispatch—not delayed for two and three years. We are still seeing outstanding nominees nitpicked and delayed to the point that good women and men are being deterred from seeking to serve as federal judges. Nominees practicing law see their work put on hold while they await the outcome of their nominations. Their families cannot plan. They are left to twist in the wind. All of this despite the fact that, by all objective accounts and studies, the judges that President Clinton has appointed are a moderate group of judges, rendering moderate decisions, and certainly including far fewer ideologues than were nominated during the Reagan Administration.

With respect to the Senate's treatment of nominees who are women or minorities, I remain vigilant. I have said that I do not regard Senator HATCH as a biased person. I have also been outspoken in my concern about the manner in which we are failing to consider qualified minority and women nominees over the last several years. From Margaret Morrow, Margaret McKeown and Sonia Sotomayor, through Richard Paez and Marsha Berzon, and including Judge James Beatty, Jr., Judge James Wynn, Roger Gregory, Enrique Moreno and all the other qualified women and minority nominees who have been delayed and opposed over the last several years, I have spoken out. The Senate will never remove the blot that occurred last October when the Republican Senators emerged from a Republican Caucus to vote lockstep against Justice Ronnie White to be a Federal District Court Judge in Missouri.

The Senate should be moving forward to consider the nominations of Judge James Wynn, Jr. and Roger Gregory to the Fourth Circuit. Fifty years has passed since the confirmation of Judge Hastie to the Third Circuit and still there has never been an African-American on the Fourth Circuit in the history of that Circuit. The nomination of Judge James A. Beaty, Jr., was previously sent to us by President Clinton in 1995. That nomination was never considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee or the Senate and was returned to President Clinton without action at the end of 1998. It is time for the Senate to act on a qualified African-American nominee to the Fourth Circuit. President Clinton spoke powerfully about these matters at the NAACP Convention. We should respond not be misunderstanding or mischaracterizing what he said, but instead taking action on these well-qualified nominees.

In addition, the Senate should act favorably on the nominations of Enrique Moreno to the Fifth Circuit. Mr. Moreno succeeded to the nomination of Jorge Rangel on which the Senate refused to act last Congress. These are well-qualified nominees who will add to the capabilities and diversity of those courts. In fact, the Chief Judge of the Fifth Circuit declared that a judicial emergency exists on that court, caused by the number of judicial vacancies, the lack of Senate action on pending nominations, and the overwhelming workload.

I continue to urge the Senate to meet its responsibilities to all nominees, including women and minorities. That highly-qualified nominees are being needlessly delayed is most regrettable. The Senate should join with the President to confirm well-qualified, diverse and fair-minded nominees to fulfill the needs of the federal courts around the country.

I ask unanimous consent that an article for the Wall Street Journal be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 12, 2000]

'RACIAL DIVISION' CHARGE IS UNTRUE

In ''Senate Isn't Guilty of Racism In Confirming Judges,'' Sen. Orrin Hatch states that in recent weeks the president has ''nominated numerous minorities for federal judgeships without consulting home-state senators'' (editorial page, Sept. 5). This is simply untrue. The administration has adhered to its practice of consulting with home-state senators prior to nominating judicial candidates, and it did so with the two nominees Sen. Hatch mentioned by name.

One of those, Roger Gregory, an accomplished African-American attorney from Virginia, was nominated for the Fourth Circuit at the end of June. Sen. Hatch says the president moved a judgeship from North Carolina to Virginia in order to make the nomination, but the seat for which Mr. Gregory was nominated has not been filed before, nor allocated to any particular state in the Fourth Circuit. Moreover, Roger Gregory has the strong support of both of his home-state senators (who were indeed consulted prior to nomination). Democratic Sen. Chuck Robb recommended Mr. Gregory to the president and has been working tirelessly on Mr. Gregory's behalf. Republican Sen. John Warner has joined Sen. Robb in requesting that Sen. Hatch give Mr. Gregory a hearing.

The Fourth Circuit, which hears cases from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina. Virginia and West Virginia, has the largest African-American population of any circuit in the country. Yet it has never had an African-American judge. It is extraordinary to suggest that the president's nomination of a highly qualified candidate who has the support of both home-state senators is part of some effort to ''generate racial divisions.'' Rather than make such claims, the Republican leadership should demonstrate its color-blind bipartisanship by promptly confirming Roger Gregory.

Indeed, the Senate has a great deal more work to do on judges. Sen. Hatch states that in 1994 the administration had argued that a ''7.4%'' vacancy rate in the judiciary was equivalent to full employment. Using that figure, he suggests that the administration has no basis for complaining about vacancies, because the vacancy rate is now close to that level. But the figure cited by the administration in 1994 was actually 4.7%. To attain even this modest goal, the Senate would need to reduce judicial vacancies to 40. That is, the Senate would need to confirm an additional 24 nominees this year. We look forward to working with the Senate Republicans to achieve this goal.

BETH NOLAN,
Counsel to the President,
The White House.

Washington.

FAST AND SIMPLE SHORTCUT TAX ACT

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today as an original cosponsor of this innovative and much-needed piece of legislation, the Fair and Simple Shortcut Tax (FASST) Act, which would streamline the process of paying federal taxes for millions of Americans. I am very pleased to join Senator DORGAN in introducing this important legislation.

The current Federal tax code is a tangle of requirements, deductions, credits, and other regulations that only a few lawyers and accountants fully understand. Still, we expect the average American citizen, under penalty of law, to have a complete grasp of all their tax obligations and to pay them in full and on time. The complexity of the current tax code has made it a burden to pay ones's tax obligations. This burden must be alleviated.

The good news is that we can do something to simplify the tax code for the millions of Americans who do not have complicated investment or corporate income and for whom paying taxes should be as easy and painless as possible. The FASST Act offers a voluntary tax plan which would simplify the filing process for millions Americans. It also provides much needed tax relief through the elimination of the marriage penalty, a tax which actually punishes people for getting married.

The FASST Act would provide a single, low tax rate of 15 percent for taxpayers who earn up to $100,000 per year in wages and receive no more than $5,000 in income from capital gains, interest, and dividends. A taxpayer who chooses to participate in this program would not receive a tax return, nor would he have to pay the federal government on April 15th because too little in taxes was deducted from his payroll. Instead, the employee would elect to fill out a modified W–4 form at work whereby his employer would withdraw the exact tax obligation at the single low rate of 15 percent. What a relief it would be for those folks who qualify to be free from the yearly burden of trying to decipher the federal tax code.

Taxpayers who elect to participate in this program would still benefit from the current standard tax deduction, as well as personal exemptions, child care credits, the Earned Income Tax Credit and a deduction for home mortgage interest expenses and property taxes. Thus, employees would experience the best of both worlds—the current tax system's generous deduction and credit system for working families, as well as a simplified tax system. This bill also provides generous savings incentives by exempting up to $5,000 of all interest, dividends and capital income from taxes.

Taxpayers who do not participate in the FASST program would also benefit from provisions in the FASST Act. First, this act reduces the marriage penalty, and provides an exemption from the Alternative Minimum Tax for many sole proprietors and small businesses. In addition, all taxpayers would be eligible to receive a 50 percent credit for up to $200 in tax preparer expenses if they file their taxes electronically. And again, there is a substantial incentive for savings and investment as up to $500 of dividend and interest income is exempt for individuals. The FASST Act is good for all taxpayers.

I believe that the FASST Act provides much needed reform to our tax system. Our current federal tax code is immense, complex, and confusing. It has become a burden on the American taxpayer. The FASST Act takes a much-needed first step toward providing a simpler, friendlier means of collecting taxes from our hard-working citizens. I am pleased to join with my fellow Senators from North Dakota and Illinois in introducing the Fast and Simple Shortcut Tax Act today.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, for the last several months, many of us here in the Senate have been urging our colleagues to pass sensible gun laws. Each year, more than 30,000 Americans are killed by gunfire (an average of 10 children and adolescents and 74 adult Americans each day) and until we act, thousands more will be lost to gun violence.

Those of us who are committed to this issue have pledged to read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

September 21, 1999:

Colden Hurt, 28, Baltimore, MD;

Troy Jones, 32, Washington, DC;

Billy Peaks, 23, Chicago, IL;

Roland Shepard, 56, Philadelphia, PA;

Charles Walker, 17, St. Louis, MO;

Omar Williams, 24, Memphis, TN;

Jessie Williamson, 42, Memphis, TN.

We cannot allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a painful reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation today.

OBJECTION TO CHANGES IN FALSE CLAIMS ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. I rise today to notify my colleagues that I have notified the Majority Leader that I will object to any changes to the False Claims Act whether in bill or amendment form.

VISA WAIVER PILOT PROGRAM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to urge the majority to lift its hold on H.R. 3767, which would permanently authorize the visa waiver pilot