Washington, stay in session, because I think this is a matter of such urgency and such paramount importance to our country and to the world that we should be continuing to focus on that matter.

The ominous forewarnings of this last couple of days affirm to me what Robert Kennedy said after the Cuban missile crisis. He said:

No action is taken against an adversary in a vacuum. The escalation on one side brings a counteresponse. A government of people will fail to understand this only at their great peril.

For the last 55 years the leaders of this country have understood that principle. They, too, faced dangerous dictators who possessed weapons of mass destruction, who headed countries that were hostile to the United States, the former Soviet Union, China, North Korea. But they didn't attack another country to eliminate those threats, even though they persisted, even though we disagreed with those countries, what their leaders did to their own people, the threats they were around the world. The principal reason was we understood the doctrine of mutual assured destruction. We understood that an attack against the United States would be an intolerable cost for our destruction of them and for the objectives we might accomplish militarily.

I believe these forewarnings we have received the last few days should cause us to ask this administration why would they expect Iraq to be any different. If the United States intervenes and begins to destroy that country and its cities, cause civilian casualties, why would we not expect Iraq to retaliate with every destructive force it has available to it within our own borders, against our own cities and our own citizens?

Why wouldn't we expect Osama bin Laden to do his worst to exploit this situation, to twist facts to be seen by the rest of the world other than as they are, but in ways that would be destructive to United States standing around the world and to our own national security now and in the days and months ahead?

Why does this administration believe it should disregard the lessons that other Presidents, Republican and Democrat, have recognized and observed and persist to be as valid today as they were then? What is different about this situation?

At the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing this morning I asked the Secretary of Defense his assessment of our ability to protect our citizens from retaliatory attacks against them if we were to invade Iraq. I asked that question twice. How do you assess, Mr. Secretary, our ability to protect our citizens in their homes and their schools and our cities from an enemy attack? Neither time did I receive a direct answer to that question. Neither time. I have the highest regard for the Secretary of Defense. He has an enormous responsibility. He brings tremendous experience and ability and a heroic dedication to our country to this task. But if all this administration can offer the American people, when our national security alert is raised to the highest level, is how to tape plastic and water, there is something very seriously wrong, if this administration intends to start a war, not against the most urgent threat to this country, not the threat that endangered us before, attacked us before and endangered us again according to many of their own officials, al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden, the tape that was released this week that issues that threat against us and our citizens once again, not an attack against al-Qaida but against Iraq, against a country that, no question, is ruled by an evil man, a dangerous dictator, a man who almost certainly, as the Secretary of State has demonstrated, the President in the State of the Union, possesses biological and chemical weapons and has for the last 12 years, ever since the first President Bush made a strategic decision at the conclusion of the gulf war to leave him in power, which may have been the right decision given the other options we had, constrained, constrained, not perfectly, not easily, certainly not voluntarily on his part, but effectively, more effectively than has been acknowledged in recent months. He is weaker, according to reports I have seen, militarily in most respects than he was before the gulf war. He does, by all accounts that we can obtain, not possess nuclear warhead capabilities at this time, which I agree with the President would be intolerable, constrain him, but in another way or manner.

Yes, an evil dictator, but one who has been constrained in key respects by active, ongoing efforts of diplomacy with our allies and containment by international forces by both former President Clinton. But in the State of the Union Contained, constrained, not perfectly, not easily, certainly not voluntarily on his part, but effectively, more effectively than has been acknowledged in recent months. He is weaker, according to reports I have seen, militarily in most respects than he was before the gulf war. He does, by all accounts that we can obtain, not possess nuclear warhead capabilities at this time, which I agree with the President would be intolerable, constrain him, but in another way or manner.

Mr. President, if we were to invade Iraq, to attack Iraq, assume that the administration intends to start a war, which is to launch a preemptive attack against another country based on what it might in the future do to us. And I think we should consider what that precedent would mean if other nations were to follow that example. If we set a precedent in this “new world order,” as it has been called, that a preemptive attack against a possible future threat is the way to resolve crises or standoffs, what will happen when other countries adopt that path?

We have seen now—and we have been forewarned—that the nuclear proliferation that we are seeing other countries undertake is the worst nightmare that many predicted years ago, decades ago if we didn't—the superpowers—bring to an end the nuclear arms race and remove them from the shelves of the nations of the world. Now we are told that half a dozen countries—and more to come—will have them. That should be and must be a warning to us. What happens if we lead down a path on which we don't want other nations to follow?

If we set a precedent of preemptive attack, that path is one that the world will follow at its peril. I urge the President to take this into the most careful consideration as he makes this fateful decision.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Arizona is to be recognized for up to 60 minutes.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, usually I begin my diatribes on the appropriations bill by lifting up the appropriations bill for all to see; one, it hasn't been delivered and, two, I note by the
size of the existing copy down by the desk of the manager that it would be quite a task to pick up this year's appropriations bill. At my advanced age, I might be in danger of sustaining a hernia. But I still think that this probably may borrow it, much being parceled out. Clearly, we have a mammoth conference report on this omnibus appropriations legislation, which nobody has been able to review, examine, and debate. I say that not without sympathy for the Senator from Alaska, who is faced with a situation where negotiations—in fact, they are going on almost as we speak, or are being completed as we speak. Certainly, the reasons for the delay—some 4 months of delay—was not under his control. But I want to discuss this very briefly in context.

The context that we are looking at with this legislation is a huge looming deficit that is in front of us and growing in size almost as far as the eye can see. The eye used to be able to see for 10 years. Now we have changed the procedures where the eye can only see for 5 years. But only a short time ago, we were awash in huge surpluses. I will never forget when Alan Greenspan testified that we are almost on the way to being solvent. The amounts associated with each earmark may not seem extraneous, but taken together they represent an incredible diversion away from Federal programs that have undergone the appropriate merit-based process.

I have two problems with this process. One, of course, is the appropriating of moneys that are really unnecessary and unauthorized and wasteful, very wasteful, but also in this legislation there are many policy changes and, of course, I object, as chairman of the Commerce Committee, that it didn't go through my committee. But I object to it even more when we have not had the open debate and votes on matters that have national implications that are fundamental policy decisions.

Let's go back to some of the necessary earmarks: First, $280,000 for asparagus technology and production in Washington; $220,000 for research future foods in Illinois—only in Illinois, of course.

My colleagues may note, as usual, the need for these earmarks are nearly always geographically based. Next is $700,000 for the Midwest poultry consortium in Iowa; $250,000 for research on the interaction of grapefruit juice and drugs. I always wondered what kind of experiments these are. One of our all-time favorites, made famous by our own Senator, is money that was spent to study the effect on the ozone layer of flatulence in cows. One always wondered about the testing procedures used to determine those effects on the ozone layer. This is another one that intrigues the observer. Regarding the interaction of grapefruit juice and drugs, one's imagination can be stimulated by the prospect of the interaction of grapefruit juice and drugs.

Then we have $600,000 for tristate joint peanut research in Alabama; $500,000 for Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois Corn Growers Association for a pilot program to develop "production protocols." Again, I have to sometimes display my ignorance. I didn't know that in order to grow corn, there was a particular requirement for a protocol regarding production.

I see that the Senator from Iowa just came on about 3 times because I illuminated me on the production protocols associated with corn growing. But whether he can or not, there will be $500,000 being split up between his State, Missouri, and Illinois to their corn growers associations. But this won't be an overall production protocol; this is only a pilot program. So I am sure there will be a great deal of additional money coming once we develop the pilot program for production protocols of growing corn.

Next is $50,000 to combat "feral hogs" in Missouri. You know, somewhere I had a little depiction of feral hogs. I know that there is a threat to civilization as we know it, or at least enough to require $50,000 to combat feral hogs. Sometimes one would get the impression that perhaps the people in Illinois could fund their own combat scenario with feral hogs. Nonetheless, we will be coming in with 50 grand to combat those feral hogs, which I am sure are a serious scourge.

There is $500,000 to continue hybrid poppy projects. But we will spend $50 million to do that next year we will have a continued program to develop production protocols for growing corn; $2 million for the biomass gasification research facility in Birmingham, AL. Again, I look forward to seeing what that is.

And then, staying right on this important mission of gasification, we have another $500,000 for the gasification of switchgrass in Iowa. Perhaps switchgrass can be part of the production protocol of corn. But one doesn't know; $1 million for the National Agricultural Based Industrial Lender Center; $10 million to develop a high-speed data transmission between the Library of Congress and education facilities, libraries, and networks serving western North Carolina. I did not know there was a special need in the western part of North Carolina, as there might have been for other parts of the country. My colleagues may note, as usual, the need for these earmarks are nearly always geographically based.

The context that we are looking at with this legislation is a huge looming deficit that is in front of us and growing in size almost as far as the eye can see.
Montana; $1 million will be spent to sample the DNA of bears in Montana.

Because these appropriations are never discussed with nonmembers of the Appropriations Committee, one can only imagine and conjure up an idea as to how they are used. We have to get the DNA. The DNA doesn't fit, you got to acquit, if I might.

I think it is important to appreciate that this $1 million for a DNA bear sampling study could solve a lot of crime in Montana. It is a pretty high-crime area. It seems to me that is, indeed, a very worthwhile expenditure of the taxpayers' dollars.

While we are at it, I want to jump out of line here a second. $202,500 to the National Peanut Festival for facilities construction for the construction of the National Peanut Festival Agriculture Arena in Dothan, AL. I was interested in the National Peanut Festival. I did not see it much on television or hear much about it. Since the Web site is a very interesting picture, I think you will be comforted to know we are spending this $202,500 for the 9-day celebration of the peanut harvest, which includes a variety of competitions, including recipe contests, beauty pageants, and tennis tournaments. Including recipe contests, this Web site is a very interesting picture. I am sorry my colleagues cannot see it, but I would be willing to provide them with copies, but there are three individuals standing by a contraption that I have not seen before, and it says farmers demonstrate antique peanut harvesting equipment at Pioneer Peanut Days. Again, it seems to me that is a worthwhile investment of $202,500.

I have also one more that is kind of interesting. $900,000 for the Show-me Aquatic Center for Development; $900,000 for the Show-me Aquatic Center in Missouri. We found a picture of it. It says: "Please Touch Me Museum, 210 North 21st Street, Philadelphia"—this is the $270,000 Please Touch Me Museum, I apologize. That is for kids and grownups. Of course, I had that confused with the very important facility that is in Missouri. I certainly would not want to confuse the different States.

One of the more remarkable aspects of this bill is in the HUD section, under EDI. There are 885 individual earmarks. Some of them are very interesting. Of course, there is $202,500 to continue the rehabilitation of the former Alaska Pulp Company mill site in Sitka, AK. I am reluctant to ask the Senator from Alaska how much that continuing rehabilitation is going to cost us overall.

We have a lot of important construction: $45,000 for the city of Tusculum, AL, for construction of facilities associated with the Helen Keller Festival; $90,000 for the city of Prattville, AL, for the Boys and Girls Club of Prattville.

I mentioned the peanut festival. Here are a couple new ones: $810,000 for the city of St. Louis, MO, for lighting sidewalks, curb, and street furniture along North Kingshighway and Chippeewa Street. It must be a fairly serious situation there that we need to spend $810,000 down there on Kings Highway Boulevard and Chippeewa Street in St. Louis.

I mentioned the Show-Me Aquatic Center in Missouri; $105,000 for the Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute in Columbia, MO, to analyze commercial shipping alternatives; $90,000 to the city of Natchez, MS, for a feasibility study to develop a slack water port. That is just for a feasibility study; $135,000 to the Culinary and Hospitality Academy Center of Las Vegas, NV, for construction related to the expansion of an education training center. For those of you who have not visited Las Vegas, you will see it is a very depressed and deprived area, and I can certainly understand why the Culinary and Hospitality Academy Center would need $135,000. I thought they could use some of mine. For the aim is not a fan of those requirements. But why in the world do we make exception for a law in an appropriations bill when you know what the result is going to be? By granting exclusive rights to one cruise line, there will be no competition. Anyone who wants to cruise Hawaii will pay much higher prices than for a commensurate cruise that people would take out of the East Coast.

I do not know if the Presiding Officer has ever been to Miami, but there are all kinds of ships cruising out of Miami, going all different places, for all different purposes, at very low cost. That is because they are all competing against each other.

A Senator from Hawaii put in a violation of law, and an exclusivity which is going to cost people who want to cruise the Hawaiian Islands an enormously greater amount of money. Why? That is crazy. I would have thought the Senator from Hawaii, after costing the taxpayers $185 million because of a provision he put in an appropriations bill—it never went through my committee which has oversight of it. It was never mentioned in my committee. After costing the taxpayers $185 million, the Senator from Hawaii then pulls this one. I am angry about it, and I will continue to be angry about it because the citizens of my State of Arizona would like to cruise the Hawaiian Islands and they would like to do it at the cheapest possible cost. When there is no competition, there is not low cost.

There has been no analysis of granting this exclusive exemption from the Passenger Vessel Services Act to the "Norwegian Cruise Lines" owned by a Malaysian company. Nor have the committees of jurisdiction had an opportunity to consider the proposal.
I tell the Senator from Alaska and the Senator from Hawaii, we are going to have a hearing on this issue, we are going to have a GAO investigation, and we are going to find out why they lost $125 million because of a provision put into this bill. We are also going to get an estimate of how much that inactivity is going to cost my citizens who want to go on a cruise at the least possible cost. I will not quit on this issue. It is wrong, and it is the wrong way to treat this process. We will have hearings in the Commerce Committee, and we will expose this for what it is—disgraceful.

There are numerous other provisions in this conference report that circumvent the clear jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee. It incorporates almost wholesale a bill passed last year by the House of Representatives regarding airport traffic control towers. The provision expands on the class of air traffic control towers that is eligible for FAA funding. I am all for aviation safety and it may be a good provision. I am troubled by several aspects of it.

First, the provision does not make new towers eligible for reimbursement. It makes new towers that were built beginning in 1996, over 7 years ago. At least the provision passed last year by the House provided that an airport tower would be eligible for a grant under this program only if the Secretary of Transportation certified that the selection of the tower for eligibility was based on objective criteria giving no weight to any congressional committee report, joint explanatory statement of a conference report, or statutory designation.

I wish to congratulate my House colleagues because they were concerned about the pork barrel projects practice and tried to insulate this particular program from such behavior. Guess what? The provision that eliminated objective criteria giving no weight to any congressional committee report, joint explanatory statement of a conference report, or statutory designation was eliminated. Why would that be eliminated, I wonder?

The conference report also includes a provision and implements a whole new funding scheme for airport security projects. I am very concerned about funding for airport security. This is a real issue for aviators. Many of the programs and the Senate Commerce Committee, the committee of jurisdiction, has already begun hearings of FAA issues. Yet the appropriators have taken it upon themselves to establish a brand new funding scheme that has never been vetted, discussed, or voted on by the authorizing committee. Some might start to wonder just what the Commerce Committee’s role is in policy decisions regarding the programs under its jurisdiction.

The conference report provides a new $2.5 billion loan program over 5 years for airport security projects without any discussion that I am aware of. The TSA was not consulted about this provision. It seems the special interest groups who were shopping this provision were the only ones that mattered. If this had gone through the regular legislative process, at least all parties could have been heard.

There are many different ways to fund security projects. This provision may be a good one. It mirrors a similar program set up at the FAA. However, the Department of Transportation Inspector General proposed several other ideas to our committee.

Another provision would allow airports to give airport improvement program money back to the FAA so the agency can hire staff to speed up environmental reviews of airport projects. This is an area in which the Commerce Committee took action last year and will continue to pursue this year. It should not be addressed in an appropriation bill.

I commend the conferees for their attempts to help protect the investment the American taxpayers continue to provide to Amtrak. The conference report, which provides Amtrak $1.05 billion for fiscal year 2003, includes conditions that require the funding to be appropriated on a quarterly basis through formal grant agreements with DOT. The conferees worked to ensure that the Amtrak cost savings and funds to meet its contractual obligations with State and local subdivisions for commuter and intercity corridor services. Amtrak should not be in a position to shut down commuter operations as it threatens to do this summer because it does not have sufficient funds to operate its entire network.

The conference committee has slightly reduced Amtrak’s appropriation from that provided in the Senate-passed measure, but it has also postponed repayment of Amtrak’s $100 million loan from DOT.

The conferees authorized the Secretary of Commerce to award grants and make repayments of up to $50 million to support travel to the United States. To carry out this new authority, the appropriators established the United States Travel and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board and provided $50 million. This tourism board has never been considered by the authorizing committee of jurisdiction. Nor did the Department of Commerce have any input on the creation of this new board. Who came up with $50 million—large agribusiness or farms at the expense of farmers and taxpayers, and policies that disproportionately benefit large agribusiness or farms at the expense of farmers and taxpayers, and certain breeds of buffalo that have suffered losses or damages as a result of a severe drought. Now it is the catfish.

I often take issue with various farm policies that disproportionately benefit large agribusiness or farms at the expense of farmers and taxpayers, and the Department of Commerce and Coast Guard to provide coordinated, routine surveys for fisheries monitoring and enforcement through use of remote-sensing aircraft and communications assets, with particular emphasis on Federal waters seaward to South Carolina and Georgia. Without review by the authorizing committee, we have no reason to believe we have any basis for knowing why this is a good use of Federal dollars and resources.

The conference report earmarks $10 million to promote and develop fishery products and research pertaining to American fisheries funds to develop an Alaskan seafood marketing program. Ten million is a lot of money to be spending on a marketing program.

As far as the Coast Guard is concerned, managers earmark a total of $83 million of the Coast Guard budget. That earmark is an increase of $10 million over last year’s figure, and they have obviously never been proposed.

In HUD, as I mentioned, 885 targeted grants.

I also will talk for a minute about the lowly catfish, one of my favorite subjects. We know the lowly catfish has been the subject of a great deal of debate and discussion on the floor of the Senate due to the fact that in another appropriations bill, we changed the name of the catfish that comes from Vietnam to basa. But now the lowly catfish, those that are still named catfish because they are raised in the United States, we are now qualifying catfish for livestock compensation programs. Catfish are cows.

As my colleagues know, the livestock compensation program is a Federal farm program that compensates eligible livestock producers, such as owners of beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, or certain breeds of buffalo that have suffered losses or damages as a result of a severe drought. Now it is the catfish.
those that compromise American agricultural trade commitments. This effort to compensate catfish farmers from a farm program that is intended for livestock stands out. I am certain that catfish proponents will offer a dozen or so examples to justify this provision. In fact, the last time we discussed this, one of my colleagues from Tennessee talked about how in his State there are catfish that leave the water and travel in herds, so perhaps that is why we are now calling a catfish a fish. And I have taken positions to justify this provision. Why should catfish then get livestock payments?

We know labeling continues to be a nationally significant agricultural issue. Again, the issue was addressed in the appropriations bill. The Army Corps of Engineers is, of course, one of the favorite places. Not only are there a lot of earmarks, but there are significant changes in policy or law under the rubric of this appropriations bill. In this legislation, the administration is prevented from proposing or even studying changes to the Army Corps of Engineers civil works program, such as reorganizing aspects of the agency's management structure, without specific direction in an act of Congress. It seems to me that is remarkable micromanaging.

I guess I have had enough of my colleagues' time at this late hour, and I know we should be voting on this bill and leaving. I point out again, this bill which the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee described as the largest appropriations bill in the history—and I certainly take his word for it—in my now 17 years of monitoring these things, has the largest number of earmarks by far. I find that wrong for a variety of reasons, but one of them being that we are supporting a war. We are about to ask young men and women to make sacrifices. In fact, some of them in the next few weeks may make the ultimate sacrifice. And here we are, business as usual, business as usual, larding our pork barrel projects, running up the deficits to historic proportions in some respects. I imagine it is historic as far as the turnaround is concerned, from a $127 billion surplus to a $300 billion deficit. I mind that very much. I think it is wrong. And I think it is the wrong policy to send to the American people about our seriousness of addressing the challenges of the war on terror.

But I am also disturbed about the policy changes that are made in appropriations bills which render authorizing committees nearly irrelevant. It is not the right thing to do. There are provisions in this bill—and I will be providing them for the record—of many policy changes that should have required authorizing action. And I am aware of. The TSA was not consulted about this provision. I don't mean they rewrote the provision. I don't mean they reworded the provision. I wish to congratulate my House colleagues. Clearly, they were concerned about the pork barrel politics practiced by the appropriators and tried to insulate this particular program from such antics. However, the appropriators committee decided that this took away too much of their power. This is the last provision. I don't mean they rewrote the provision. They literally crossed it out in the conference report.

Mr. President, the conference report also includes a provision that implements a new whole funding scheme for airport security projects. I am very concerned about finding for airport security. This is a reauthorization year for aviation programs, and the Senate Commerce Committee, the committee of jurisdiction, has already begun hearings on FAA issues. Yet the appropriators have taken it upon themselves to establish a brand new funding program that has never been discussed, or voted on by the authorizers. Some might start to wonder just what the Commerce Committee's role is in policy decisions regarding the programs under its jurisdiction.

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Mr. President, there are numerous other provisions in this conference report that circumvent the clear jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee. For example, it incorporates almost wholesale a bill passed last year by the House of Representatives regarding air traffic control towers. The provision expands on the class of air traffic control towers that is eligible for federal money. We are all for aviation safety. I think this may be a good provision, I'm troubled by several aspects of it.

First, the provision doesn't just make new towers eligible for reimbursement, it also makes eligible towers that were built beginning in 1996—over seven years ago. Things were very different seven years ago. Bill Clinton was President and I had more hair. I know President Clinton's theme song was "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow," by Fleetwood Mac, but I find it very difficult to believe they built towers in 1996 had any expectation they should get reimbursed by the federal government seven years later. It's awfully nice that they're willing to do this objectively, this omnibus bill was also the first economic stimulus package of the year. Had I known, I might have sought inclusion of a payroll tax credit.

Secondly, at least the provision passed last year by the House provided that an airport tower would be eligible for a grant under this program only if the Secretary certified that the selection of the tower for eligibility was based on objective criteria, giving "no weight to any congressional committee report, joint explanatory statement of a conference report, or statutory designation." I wish to congratulate my House colleagues. Clearly, they were concerned about the pork barrel politics practiced by the appropriators and tried to insulate this particular program from such antics. However, the appropriators committee decided that this took away too much of their power. This is the last provision. I don't mean they rewrote the provision. They literally crossed it out in the conference report.

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General proposed several other ideas to our committee. Another provision would allow airports to give Airport Improvement Program (AIP) money to Amtrak so the agency can hire staff to speed up environmental reviews airports projects. This is an area in which the Commerce Committee took action on last year's bill to pay for the FAA's costs of administering the EAS program, and the Small Community Air Service Development Pilot Program. These are worthy activities and programs, but it violates the long-established purpose of AIP to use monies for these things. This continual raiding of AIP which is also being enroached upon by the appropriation of security costs from it will slow the necessary development. We may be in an aviation funding crisis this year if this wholesale taking of money from accounts that are for capacity, infrastructure and modernization does not stop.

AMTRAK

I want to commend the conferees for their efforts to address the funding needs of Amtrak. Since 1971, has received federal subsidies totaling $2.6 billion—an enormous sum for a system that serves less than one percent of the traveling public. The conference report provides $1.05 billion for FY 2003, includes conditions that require the funding to be appropriated on a quarterly basis through formal grant agreements with the Department of Transportation. Amtrak should not be in a position to shut down commuter operations, as it threatened last summer, because it does not need funds to operate an entire network. Commuter operations, such as those on the Northeast Corridor, are funded by state and local governments and clearly should not be cut, even if other Amtrak operations should cease. Further, Corridor trains that are helping subsidize also should receive priority. Continuing to operate Northeast Corridor services, off-Corridor commuter service, and those trains financed in part by the states would preserve service for 93 percent of Amtrak's combined intercity and commuter ridership.

While the conference committee has slightly reduced Amtrak's appropriation from that provided in the Senate-passed measure, from $1.2 billion to $1.05 billion, it also has postponed repayment of Amtrak's $100 million dollar loan from DOT, effectively providing Amtrak's $1.35 billion of unsecured funds critical to continue operating while Congress considers the long-term future for intercity passenger rail service. I look forward to a full and open debate on this issue.

TOURISM BOARD

Mr. President, the conferees authorize the Secretary of Commerce to award grants and make direct payments of up to $50,000,000 to support travel to the United States. To carry out this new authority, the appropriators establish the United States Travel Promotion Advisory Board and provide $50,000,000. This Tourism Board has never been discussed by the Commerce Committee, nor did the Department of Commerce have input on the creation of this new Board. This is another example of authorizing language in an appropriations bill and $50,000,000 is an enormous amount of money for an initiative that has not yet been fully vetted.

NASA

Mr. President, I commend the conferees for their efforts to address the funding needs of the Space Shuttle Columbia accident investigation. Just yesterday, the Commerce Committee held a hearing on the investigation, and I agree that the Congress should be supportive of this effort. The need for this incident Investigation Board. We must find the cause of this horrible tragedy, and ensure that such an accident never happens again.

Unfortunately, the conferees included provisions in the conference report that should be handled by the authorizing committee of jurisdiction. For example, the conference report establishes a working capital fund for capital repairs, renovations, rehabilitation, sustenance, demolition, or replacement of NASA real property. As Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, I am fully aware of NASA's declining infrastructure which need of NASA missions. In light of the Space Shuttle Columbia accident, I think it would be a prudent course of action if we fully consider this provision in the context of an overall review of NASA, which is currently underway. No hearings have yet been held on this proposed working capital fund, nor has it been considered by the full Senate. I do not question the conference's strong interest in addressing NASA funding needs, but I note this is yet another case of authorizing on an appropriations bill. I am particularly concerned by provisions in the conference report that would establish a NASA demonstration project regarding an enhanced use of real property. The Commerce Committee has not had a chance to review this language, and no hearings have been held on this enhanced lease scheme. The leasing of public property serves a public discussion.

ELECTION REFORM

I am pleased to see that the conferees appropriated almost $1.5 billion to implement the election reforms. Is this funding is a good start for a process to improve our system of election administration and renew the public's confidence in our election system? As Chairman of the Commerce Committee, I am concerned that this conference report includes payments to help states to promote disabled voter access.

NOAA

The conference report provides more than $400 million for ocean and coastal programs just for the aquatic—not atmospheric—programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This funding will go toward more than $30 million for programs that NOAA did not request funding for these programs in their budget, in fact, many programs that they did request funding for are underfunded.

The conference report appropriates an astounding $100,000,000 for fisheries disaster assistance. Of this amount, $35,000,000 is for direct assistance to the state of Alaska, for any person, business, or town that has experienced an economic hardship even remotely connected to fishing. This money is in addition to the $20,000,000 they are also getting for developing an Alaskan seafood marketing program.

Of the remainder, $20,000,000 is for voluntary capacity reduction programs in the Northeast and West Coast groundfish fisheries; $10,000,000 for Hawaii fishermen affected by fishing area closures and other management rules; and $5,000,000 is for blue crab fisheries affected by low harvests.

The report promises these hand-outs without requiring any accountability for how the money is actually spent. These appropriations were made without offering any form of justification or rationale. How much federal money do these regions really need, and how do they compare to the needs of other regions? Again, without any review by the authorizing committee, we have no basis or knowing why this is regional program is a good use of federal dollars and resources is this really the best use of limited Coast Guard resources, at a time when our country is under a heightened terror alert?

The conference report also earmarks $10 million from the 'Promote and Develop Fishery Products and Research Pertaining to American Fishery' fund, to develop an Alaskan seafood marketing program. $10 million is a whole lot of money, depending on a marketing program, yet we are given no details on exactly what this federal funding will be used for.

COAST GUARD

The conference report and statement of managers earmarks a total of $83.962 million of the Coast Guard budget. The level of Coast Guard earmarks increased over $30 million compared to the enacted FY02 Coast Guard budget.

In this critical time when the Coast Guard is so hard pressed to carry out its homeland security missions, it is indefensible to be earmarking the Coast Guard's budget for pet products. Adding insult to injury, the Commerce Committee report takes the Coast Guard's budget for homeland security at the expense of its other traditional missions, yet in the same report, they earmark critically needed resources for other projects. This type of micro-management serves only to tie the Coast Guard's hands and deny it the flexibility it needs to respond to very real threats.

We all know the Coast Guard is under-funded and definitely in need of additional personnel and resources. Our first step should be to give it its budget without these unrequested and restrictive earmarks. Here are just a few examples.
The statement of managers earmarks $1,600,000 for enhanced oil spill prevention activities in the waters of Washington State. This earmark was not requested by the Administration. I think it should be removed. I believe that one should not receive an award for the most creative language. It states, and I quote, "the Committee expects the Captain of the Port to use his present authority in allocating funds to measures that he believes will best protect these waters. Such measures could include a cost sharing arrangement with the State of Washington for the hiring of a response tug at Neah Bay. However, these funds could be allocated to alternative measures if, in the view of the Captain of the Port, such alternative measures provide a superior level of protection." Does anyone wonder why the Appropriations Committee expects this Coast Guard captain to make $4 million is for LTS-101 helicopter engines.

The statement of managers earmarks $10,000,000 of the Coast Guard’s Acquisition, Construction, and Improvements budget for a new line item entitled "Security Surveillance and Protection." What does this mean? The Senate report vaguely stated that this provision is to develop and acquire equipment that will improve security surveillance and perimeter protection capabilities in the Nation’s ports, waterways, and coastal areas. In other words, it could mean almost anything.

The statement of managers earmarks $15,000,000 for costs associated with repairing and rebuilding the Coast Guard’s Integrated Support Center at Pier 36 in Seattle. These funds are in addition to the $10,000,000 earmarked in the FY 2003 Transportation Appropriations bill. None of these funds were requested by the Administration and this project is not one of the Coast Guard’s highest priorities for shoreride construction. My question is, how much will be earmarked for this project in next year’s budget?

Of particular note, the Conference report earmarks over 27 percent of the Coast Guard’s research and development budget for specific projects. These earmarks will hinder the Coast Guard’s efforts to better surveil our ports, create new technologies to detect explosives and weapons of mass destruction, and develop new technologies.

The statement of managers earmarks $1,000,000 to support the continued development, demonstration, and evaluation of engineering research at Coast Guard facilities. The statement of managers also earmarks $1,000,000 for a pilot project to test automatic search and rescue spectral imaging technology for Coast Guard C-130 aircraft solely located at Kalaheo, Hawaii.

Once again we are seeing an Appropriations Bill attempting to circumvent the authorization process. This bill would limit the funding for Coast Guard flag officers to 37. The Coast Guard is authorized under Title 14 to have 61 flag and current commission flag officers on active duty. As the Coast Guard grows in size to meet its new homeland security missions it will not have any of its authorized flexibility to promote additional flag officers. If there is a concern that the Coast Guard has too many flag officers, then that concern should be raised through the Congress.

The bill authorizes the Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay, Maryland and other Coast Guard specialty facilities designated by the Committee to enter into joint public-private partnerships and in doing so may enter into agreements, receive, and retain funds from and pay funds to such public and private entities. The bill would accept contributions of funds, materials, services, and the use of facilities from such entities. This provision would enable the federally subsidized Yard to indirectly compete with private industry for shipbuilding contracts. This is authorization language pertaining to the Coast Guard Yard which is also entirely within the jurisdiction of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Nonetheless prior to the consideration of this legislation by the Appropriations Committees, I notified either the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee concerning the changes in law.

Mr. MCCAIN. I yield the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Senator from Nevada had an inquiry. I yield to the Senator from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Just so the two leaders know, does the Senator from Illinois know for how long he wishes to speak?

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator from Nevada what are the plans for this evening?

Mr. REID. What we are working towards is having final passage on the bill this evening, if all things work out right.

Mr. DURBIN. I certainly don’t want to delay final passage.

Mr. REID. Why doesn’t the Senator proceed?

The Senator from Georgia also wishes to speak for 3 minutes?

Mr. STEVENS. Yes.

Mr. REID. Why don’t we have the Senator from Georgia speak first for 3 minutes, and then the Senator from Illinois speak. If the managers want to speak then, they can do so. I so ask unanimous consent.

Mr. STEVENS. It is 5 minutes and 3 minutes, is that correct?

Mr. REID. He’s going to stop whenever you want him to.

Mr. STEVENS. All right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I don’t think I will take my full 3 minutes. I just want to rise and say that while, Mr. Chairman, I am going to vote for the omnibus bill, I am really disappointed with the agriculture disaster portion in this omnibus bill. On the Senate side we debated and discussed this issue at length. The chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, who is also chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations subcommittee, I thought did an excellent job of getting together a package that accomplishes the goal of getting funds immediately in the hands of farmers all across America. My farmers have had 5 rough years back to back, and they need money now.

Under the provisions that came out of the conference committee, which was basically the House provision, farmers across America are not going to be getting funds until probably August, September, or October. Farmers are going to be out of business if they don’t get the money now. To pass this provision in this bill I think is the wrong approach. I don’t like that provision in the bill. I do support it. I know the chairman had a very difficult time with this particular issue as well as other issues, but I think that is wrong and I wanted to register my objection. I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I know the amount of labor and work that goes into the preparation of a bill and the revision of a bill. I also know when you postpone the orderly process of passing spending bills and wait an extra 4 or 5 months, there is an opportunity for mischief. I think only in time will we be able to sift the 6,000, 1,800, 2,000 pages of this bill to find out in painful detail what is included.

There are several things that have come to my attention. I would like to draw them to the attention of my colleagues. I think that is critically important.

Let me start by saying there is one issue most people don’t like to talk about and I am going to raise this evening because I think it is critically important. The District of Columbia is a city which is governed by a mayor, a city council, and 535 wannabe mayors in the Congress. It seems that every Member of the House or Senate who wanted to be a mayor at some time in their lives decided at some point to make a decision for the District of Columbia. I think that is unfortunate. The people of this city, like every city, have a right to govern themselves. Occasionally that intrusion of congressional mischief can reach a perilous state. Let me give an example.

The AIDS rate for the AIDS disease in our Nation’s Capital is the highest in the country. It is 10 times the national average. More and more women and men are being diagnosed with AIDS in Washington, DC. DC health officials reported last October 616 new AIDS cases in 2001 alone, 33 percent among women. In 1981 women only accounted for 7 percent of AIDS cases in the District of Columbia.

City health officials in Washington estimate 40 percent of AIDS cases are associated with injected drugs.

The question is, how can we stop this AIDS epidemic in the Nation’s Capital, which is not only infecting more and more women and children, but appears to be out of control. Frankly, there are programs that work. One of the programs is not popular to talk about. My colleagues are not enthusiastic about it, but you cannot run away from reality. It is a needle exchange program. It is a program that invites addicts in, in an effort to try to first give them a needle that is clean, and then bring them into rehabilitation so they can stop their addiction.

There are those who say don’t give them clean needles because they will just keep using them. But you know what they will use, they will use dirty needles and pass the AIDS epidemic on and on and on.

I am not expert in this area. I get squeamish talking about needles and...
injections. But the fact is, the people who are experts, the American Medical Association and medical officials, have said it works. Put these programs on the street corners and in the storefronts of Washington, DC, and we can start to cut the AIDS infection rate in our Nation's Capital. There is no reason in my mind why the people of the District of Columbia should not be able to use their own money to try this approach to reduce drug addiction and reduce the AIDS epidemic in our nation's capital.

Across the United States, there are programs in many States. But sadly enough, the Members of the House of Representatives have put in a provision that prohibits the District of Columbia from even using its own tax dollars to in any way support this kind of project.

Some of the very congressmen who beat on the desk and beat on their chest and talk about how they are going to fight these needle exchange programs represent districts and States where these programs take place today. This is a sad outcome in this bill. I hope those who reflect on it will realize they are taking some high and mighty moral position and people will die because of it.

Stand by the doctors, stand by the professionals. Stop playing mayor and city council for the District of Columbia. Sadly, this appropriation continues.

Exhaustive scientific review has found that needle exchange programs are an effective way to slow the spread of HIV and AIDS. In a speech last September, Dr. Joseph O'Neill, Director of the Office of National AIDS policy indicated that the administration did not oppose the use of state and local funds to support needle exchange programs.

The American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Association of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association endorse these programs. The Institute of Medicine identified access to sterile syringes as one of four “unrealized opportunities” in HIV prevention in a publication issued last year. The IOM committee recommends that the Administration “rescind the existing prohibition against the use of federal funds for needle exchange to allow communities that desire such programs to institute them using federal resources.”

Former Surgeon General David Satcher, MD stated that:

There is conclusive scientific evidence that syringe exchange programs, as part of a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy, are an effective public health intervention that reduces transmission of HIV and does not encourage the illegal use of drugs.

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, MD concluded that needle exchange programs are an “effective means of preventing the spread of the disease [HIV/AIDS] without increasing the use of illicit drugs.” He called limiting the use of state and local funds for these programs “counterproductive.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that there were 156 needle exchange programs operating in the United States in 83 cities and 31 States last year, which receive state and local financial support for their activities. None of these programs receive Federal support at this time.

The CDC publication also indicated that 95 percent of needle exchange programs in operation referred clients to substance use treatment and counseling programs, and over half provide on site voluntary HIV testing and more than a quarter also screen for hepatitis B and C.

In 2000, four needle exchange programs were functioning in my home state of Illinois.

In spite of the overwhelming support from public health and medical professionals, we here in Congress have once again prevented the District of Columbia from using its own funds to finance these lifesaving programs. I was pleased that the Omnibus Appropriations bill passed by the Senate allowed the District of Columbia to use local funds to finance a needle exchange program. Washington, DC has one needle exchange program, Prevention Works, that is supported with private funding. Both the Mayor and Police Chief support the program.

However, I am deeply disappointed to learn that the conference report we are considering today maintains the irresponsible status quo, which prevents the District from using its own locally generated revenue to finance needle exchange programs.

This conference report disregards the expert opinion of former Surgeons Generals David Satcher and C. Everett Koop, leading medical and public health organizations, the Director of the Office of National AIDS policy and the Institute of Medicine.

It is unacceptable for Congress to impose a dollar cap on how much the City may spend on attorneys for these cases, particularly after a judge has awarded a fee based on a reasonable-ness standard. However, I do support language in this bill which addresses concerns about particular attorneys who have shamelessly taken an advantage of the system.

I support a complete bar on paying attorneys’ fees in cases in which the District’s Chief Financial Officer, CFO, determines that an attorney, officer, or employee of the firm has a pecuniary interest in any special education diagnostic services, schools, or other special education service providers.

Furthermore, I believe the provisions in the Senate bill which mandate stronger ethical standards are appropriate.

I support the provisions in the bill dictating that the District’s CFO require disclosure by attorneys in IDEA cases of any financial, corporate, legal, business, professional, or personal relationships with special education diagnostic services, schools, or other special education service providers before paying attorneys’ fees; that the CFO may
require certification by counsel that all services billed in special education were rendered; that the CFO report to Congress quarterly on the certifications and the amount paid by the government of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Public Schools, to attorneys in claims brought under IDEA; and that the District’s Inspector General may audit the certifications to ensure attorney compliance.

It is my hope that these provisions will produce needed accountability. I am glad they were retained in the final product.

I am disappointed, but not surprised, that the cap remains in this final version of the bill. I share the sentiment that abuses of this program need to stop. I want to work to address that problem and to figure out why the District has had such perennial problems with its ability to meet the needs of its children in special education.

But this is not the first time this Republican Congress has deprived children of legal recourse when they are denied services to which they are entitled. It is wrong for the Republican Congress to preclude the District of Columbia from using its own funds to make all legitimate payments in this critical special education program.

There is another provision that was slipped in this bill as it relates to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Freedom of Information Act. This provision is an enormous setback to the efforts of State and local governments to combat illegal firearms trafficking. It undermines the very purpose of the Freedom of Information Act.

This act entitles citizens to open access to Government records, prevents the Government from shielding its activities from public scrutiny. The City of Chicago, which I represent, filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain information about the ATF trace database. The purpose, of course, is to determine which gun sellers and manufacturers were responsible for selling guns to criminals.

In response to these rulings, the gun industry went to the House Appropriations Committee and asked for a rider in this bill to prevent the ATF from complying with the FOIA request and telling the City of Chicago and the public which firearms were being shipped.

This provision sets a dangerous precedent because it essentially direets a Federal agency not to comply with the Federal court ruling, thus undermining the very purpose of FOIA. If litigants can be denied information under FOIA through legislative action—even when a Federal court has upheld this request—FOIA itself is in jeopardy.

There is no cost justification for this. This provision is an attempt by the gun industry to stop cities that are ravaged by gun crime from going after the irresponsible gun dealers who are selling guns to criminals. And the NRA and the gun industry are shielding them with this rider in the appropriations bill.

I was joined by Senators Jack Reed and Ted Kennedy in urging that this provision not be included. Unfortunately, it was.

Let me acknowledge also, as has been said by some of my colleagues, that I am very concerned about the language of the legislation for homeland security in this bill. The Senate, in its version of this bill, added almost $4 billion in homeland security funds to be sent back to the State and local governments to protect America. As I stand and speak on the floor of the Senate, we are warning families across America that we are in orange alert and that they have to take special precautions to protect themselves and their children from the possibility of biological and chemical warfare and dirty radio-active bombs.

Sadly enough, we are not providing the resources for the State and local governments to meet this challenge. Make no mistake, America is prepared to attack in the Middle East, but America is not prepared to defend us and to believe that we're prepared.

This bill cuts out almost $4 billion that would have gone for some very important purposes: Additional money for the Transportation Security Administration for monitoring airports; additional money for the INS and border security to stop those from coming in this country who are bent on bad behavior; community policing grants to try to help communities have someone on the other end of the line when you dial 9–1–1, cut $330 million; FEMA disaster recovery assistance, cut by $1 billion; the Department of Justice Office of Domestic Preparedness, cut by $1 billion; firefighter grants, cut by $150 million; interoperable communications equipment, cut by $100 million; the No. 1 priority in my State so that the police and firefighters and medical first responders can communicate, cut in this appropriations bill from the Senate level.

...These cuts, frankly, came at the request and with the approval of the White House and the Office of Management and Budget.

Emergency Operation Center, cut nationwide by $155 million; port contingency fund for the INS and border security demonstration projects so that we can see dangerous cargo coming in these ships, cut by $1 million; explosives training initiative, cut by $7 million; and $42 million from embassy security.

I pray to God that nothing happens to this country as a result of Terrorism. But I think we have been derelict in our duty to provide the resources to State and local governments to protect our families and protect our families and businesses across America. This bill, with its $4 billion in cuts off the Senate level, leaves us in a precarious situation and one that I hope does not come back to haunt us in years to come.

Let me conclude on a positive note. I thank the Senator from Alaska. Despite these words of critique, I personally appreciate, as does Senator Kennedy, this provision on immigration reform that he took in the global AIDS epidemic. His decision on the floor to approve an amendment which we offered is going to mean that thousands and maybe more will have their lives saved. I thank the Senator from Alaska. He has been a leader on this issue all the way. We have reached a 42-percent increase in funding to fight the global AIDS epidemic through his cooperation and leadership. I thank him very much.

I yield the floor.

I ask unanimous consent that a statement entitled “Underfunding Homeland Security” be printed in the RECORD.

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

UNDERFUNDING HOMELAND SECURITY

At a time when the Administration is ramping up for war overseas, one would think we would be doing everything possible to fortify our security at home as well.

That's certainly what the Administration has to believe. We are being asked to spend more money for homeland security budget is also reduced by approximately 42 percent. This Administration can and must do better to protect the safety of the American people.

This bill leaves significant gaps in funding for homeland security priorities.

The Republican-controlled conference committee rejected increases in homeland security funding that were approved unanimously last year by a Democratic-led Appropriations Committee. Instead, the Republican-controlled conference imposed an additional 42 percent across-the-board cut to all federal programs, leaving already cash-strapped initiatives in even greater need.

The results of the cumulative cuts, which total more than $4.4 billion:

First Responders: This bill cuts $2.98 billion from activities designed to aid first responders. Cuts include a $1.59 billion reduction for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—including a $150 million cut to firefighter grants—as well as a $235 million cut to funds for police and firefighters to purchase communications equipment and a $355 million cut to fund emergency operations centers.

Port and Air Enforcement: The bill reduces funding for Community Oriented Policing (COPS) public safety and community policing grants by more than 40 percent—from $330 million to $200 million. This cut would completely eliminate funding needed to hire 1,300 community-based police officers.

Aviation/Port Security: The bill cuts $170 million from Transportation Security Administration (TSA), impeding efforts to improve airport security, and cuts $46 million from port security funds. The bill also makes cuts to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol budget in the loss of more than 200 employees and compromising the implementation of the Container Security Initiative and other homeland security efforts. The INS/Border security budget is also reduced by approximately $182 million.
Other Cuts: The bill also cuts programs to train state and federal law enforcement and security personnel by nearly $50 million, including a $7 million cut to the Explosives Training Initiative and a $42 million to embassies security.

A supplemental appropriations bill would be necessary to provide funding adequate to meet the security needs of localities across the country in advance of any military action in Iraq.

ILLINOIS

States and localities are still waiting for the funds promised to them. The States have legitimate concerns. There’s a lot of brave talk about fighting terrorism, but when it comes to paying for it, this administration has not delivered.

In my home State of Illinois, we have an Illinois Terrorism Task Force (TTF). This is a collective body representing 50 agencies addressing emergency needs throughout the state of Illinois. They have told me that a minimum of $100 million is required to cover security expenses in Illinois for FY03.

The Terrorism Task Force originally asked for $320 million in federal funding and then scaled back its request to the current level ($300 million) in anticipation of federal budget cuts.

According to the TTF director Mike Chamness, these funds are crucial to Illinois’ ability to properly address the threat of terror.

Without these dollars, programs designed to secure Illinois will cease to exist.

First responders will be ill-equipped and prepared to address emergency situations.

Major items in the TFF’s $300 million request include:

- $25 million for first responders’ respiration equipment upgrade (nuclear, biological, and chemical).
- $14.4 million for communication systems (interoperable communications equipment for police, firefighters, and state/local emergency responders).
- Elite Terror Response Team: under current funding Federal monies have not been available to send teams for the ‘Elite Response’ training.

It is imperative that my home state of Illinois—like every other State in this nation—provides their front-line first responders the floor area and training as we can. I will be back, asking that this provision be restored to the Omnibus Bill, which will be dealt with at the end of today’s business.

The 2003 appropriations bill helps us to fill in that gap, and we must ensure that the funding for homeland security and anti-terrorism efforts is adequate to meet these needs.

NEED TO DO MUCH MORE THAN DUCT TAPE & PLASTIC

We can’t stand up and say we’re truly doing everything we can to ensure that our cities and counties, bridges and roads, and our critical infrastructure are as secure as possible and that our fellow Americans are safe on our soil if this bill is what represents the level of funding needed to fund programs to ensure homeland security.

I fully expect the President to come back to Congress and ask for additional funds to support our military needs. Without question, we must address these needs. But it would be unconscionable to increase funding for military activities in Iraq and neglect our security at home. If war comes to our shores with Iraq, the battle lines will be expanded to include our country. We simply cannot afford to leave American citizens unprotected.

Another provision slipped in to the appropriations bill at the last minute involves the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Freedom of Information Act.

This provision sets a dangerous precedent for the efforts of state and local governments to combat illegal firearms trafficking and would undermine the very purpose of the Freedom of Information Act.

AFRICAN FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PROVISION (RE: CITY OF CHICAGO LAWSUIT VS. GUN INDUSTRY)

This provision sets a dangerous precedent because it essentially directs a federal agency not to comply with a federal court ruling, thus undermining the very purpose of FOIA.

If litigants can be denied information under FOIA through legislative action—even when a federal court has upheld the request—FOIA itself is in jeopardy.

There is no justification for this provision.

The City of Chicago demonstrated in its litigation that it would take the ATF less than 10 minutes to assemble and release the data is has requested.

I was joined by Senators Reed and Kennedy in urging that this provision not be included, and I am disappointed that it was.

In the past, have challenged the Senate and the President to back up the high priority we have placed on the global AIDS pandemic with adequate resources.

Senator DeWine has even called me a “bull dog” on this issue. I took that as a great compliment.

This 2003 appropriations process demonstrated that the Senate does indeed recognize the need for increased resources to fight global AIDS.

In December, 1, and 15 other Senators, sent a letter to appropriators asking them to increase overall AIDS spending by 50 percent over 2002 levels. At the time we were looking for an increase of $90 million.

While facing $9-$10 billion in cuts throughout the FY 2003 appropriations bill, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee responded to this request by managed to find an additional $41 million for global AIDS.

The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee agreed to match House funding of $236 million, bringing the funds going to the CDC’s Global AIDS Program by about $15 million.

While this increase of $56 million was welcome, unfortunately, it was not enough.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The call will the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, under the previous