

that Pakistanis, Americans, and people around the world hold dear: the right to speak one's mind, to practice one's religion as one chooses, and to be free from discrimination based on one's background or beliefs.

He was clear eyed about the risks of speaking out, and despite innumerable death threats, he insisted he had a duty to his fellow Pakistanis to defend equal rights and tolerance from those who preach division, hate, and violence. He most courageously challenged the

blasphemy laws of Pakistan under which individuals have been prosecuted for speaking their minds or practicing their own faiths. Those who committed this crime should be brought to justice, and those who share Mr. Bhatti's vision of tolerance and religious freedom must be able to live free from fear. Minister Bhatti will be missed by all who knew him, and the United States will continue to stand with those who are dedicated to his vision of tolerance and dignity for all human beings.

## Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Continue Federal Government Appropriations *March 2, 2011*

I'm pleased that Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together and passed a plan that will cut spending and keep the Government running for the next 2 weeks. But we cannot keep doing business this way. Living with the threat of a shutdown every few weeks is not responsible, and it puts our economic progress in jeopardy. That's why I'm calling on Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress to begin meeting immediately with the Vice President, my Chief of Staff, and Budget Director so we can find common ground on a budget that makes sure we are living within

our means. This agreement should cut spending and reduce deficits without damaging economic growth or gutting investments in education, research, and development that will create jobs and secure our future. This agreement should be bipartisan, it should be free of any party's social or political agenda, and it should be reached without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to White House Chief of Staff William M. Daley. It also referred to H.J. Res. 44.

## Statement on Senator Daniel K. Akaka's Decision Not To Seek Reelection *March 2, 2011*

Danny Akaka answered the call to serve right after high school by joining the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. When he returned to Honolulu, he continued to serve the people of Hawaii as an educator before embarking on more than three decades of distinguished service in both Houses of Congress. Danny spent his career fighting for our troops, veterans, and their families, and for the rights of Native Hawaiians. He worked tirelessly to reform Wall

Street and to make sure that consumers and small-business owners are treated fairly in our system. His voice in the Senate will be missed.

Michelle and I would like to join the people of Hawaii in saying mahalo to Danny for his lifetime of service and offer both him and Millie our best wishes for the future.

NOTE: The statement referred to M. Mildred Akaka, wife of Sen. Akaka.