

this month. The Supply Corps is charged with the responsibility of providing logistical support to all U.S. Navy ships. The Navy Supply Corps was created by Congress in the Naval Armament Act of 1794 and officially began its service to our Nation in 1795.

The Supply Corps has seen many dramatic changes since the early days of its founding. During the late 1790's, each of our Navy ships was assigned a single warrant officer with the enormous responsibility of purchasing and providing all of the necessary equipment and provisions to maintain the ship's daily operations. A modern aircraft carrier serving with the U.S. Navy today may have as many as 15 supply officers aboard. The board variety of duties currently performed by supply officers require them to have detailed knowledge of accounting procedures, food service, foreign currency exchanges, and management of pay records. The Navy Supply Corps School currently trains about 3,800 students per year to become specialists in business, inventory management, financial data processing, transportation, storage procedures, petroleum handling, and purchasing.

I am pleased to note that the Navy Supply Corps School has been located in Athens, GA, since January 15, 1954. Every supply officer serving with the U.S. Navy has been trained at the Supply Corps School in Athens. In addition the school is home to the foreign officer supply course [FOSCO]. Since the course began its operations in 1955, it has graduated more than 1,200 international students/officers from over 50 different countries. The foreign officer supply course serves the extremely important function of increasing the number of military contacts between the United States and other friendly governments. Such contacts enhance the level of understanding between nations and make significant contributions to the cause of peace. Recently, the Navy Supply Corps School received the prestigious "E" Award, which recognizes excellence in the field of training, from the Chief of Naval Education and Training.

The outstanding relationship between the Navy Supply Corps School and the local Athens community should serve as a model for other military installations and host communities to follow. Many of the students and staff at the Navy Supply Corps School actively participate as tutors and mentors for local at-risk students in Athens area schools. While the students benefit from the interaction with much-needed positive role models, the participating service members receive a boost in morale that comes from the realization that they are making a recognizable improvement in the lives of their fellow citizens.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the U.S. Navy Supply Corps for its 200 years of excellent service. We wish it continued success in the future.●

#### PREEMPTION OF STATE PRODUCT LIABILITY LAWS

● Mr. COHEN. Mr. President, I have opposed Federal product liability reform legislation primarily because I believe it is a mistake to replace laws that have been carefully crafted by the State courts and legislature over the past two centuries with a one-size-fits-all piece of legislation developed in Washington, DC. Through the time-tested methods of common law adjudication and legislative adjustment, the State courts and legislatures have worked together to develop tort laws that strike the appropriate balance between the needs of plaintiffs and defendants, and those of consumers and business. Over the past decade, the States have been reforming their own tort systems by experimenting with alternative dispute resolution procedures, caps on punitive damages, and changes in liability standards. In fact, the most recent edition of the American Bar Association Journal reports that State legislatures have taken up more than 70 new tort law bills in their current sessions and that new product liability laws have been enacted in Illinois, Michigan, and North Dakota this year.

This is the way the Federal system is supposed to work. When a problem arises, the States should be the forum for experimenting with new practices and devising new solutions. A Federal law, such as the one passed by the Senate, would bring this experimentation to a grinding halt and make Congress, which has virtually no experience legislating in this area, responsible for the entire Nation's product liability system. It is ironic that this extension of Federal power is coming at a time when we are trying to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government by shifting authority to the States and localities.

Recently, the National Conference of State Legislatures adopted a resolution opposing Federal product liability legislation. The Conference noted the proposed Federal legislation would conflict with State laws governing tort liability, worker's compensation, and insurance and would place State legislatures and courts in an intolerable legal straightjacket.

I ask that the complete text of the National Conference of State Legislatures' resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The resolution follows:

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES RESOLUTION ADOPTED JULY 20, 1995

NCSL has reviewed proposed federal legislation that would preempt state law by severely restricting the rights of persons injured by defective products to seek recovery in state courts. Such legislation fails to meet the standards necessary for federal preemption.

In particular, no comprehensive evidence exists demonstrating either that state product liability laws have created a problem of such dimension that a federal solution is warranted or that federal legislation would achieve its stated goals. NCSL believes that

the proposed legislation would create serious new problems in the field of product liability by dictating a single set of rules controlling the timeliness of claims and the admissibility of evidence. It would conflict with long-standing state laws governing tort liability, workers' compensation and insurance regulations. By doing so, such proposals would place state legislatures and state courts in an intolerable legal straightjacket.

Therefore, in conformance with our general policy in opposition to federal preemption of state law and in the conviction that it is particularly improper for the federal government to attempt to restrict citizen access to state courts, the National Conference of State Legislatures strongly opposes all legislation before Congress that would have the effect of preempting state laws regulating recovery for injuries caused by defective products.●

#### THE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL ANTITRUST REFORM ACT

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate Judiciary Committee began consideration of the Major League Baseball Antitrust Reform Act, S. 627. I look forward to the committee completing its consideration of this measure at our next business meeting and reporting it to the Senate.

This year the major league season did not begin, of course, until a Federal judge granted an injunction and the owners and players, who had shut the game down last August and robbed fans of pennant races and a World Series, finally declared a ceasefire in their ongoing hostilities. They had to scramble to begin a shortened 144-game schedule.

As far as I can tell the owners and the players have not gotten back to the bargaining table. They are no closer to reaching a collective bargaining agreement than they were 3 months ago. A further unfair trade practices complaint remains pending against the owners.

Interest in major league baseball is undeniably down. Attendance figures show it—they are down between 20 and 30 percent. Ratings for the recent All Star Game were down 10 percent from last year. Advertising and merchandising revenues show it, as well. Both NBC and ABC recently indicated that they will not even bid on broadcast rights for baseball in the future.

In spite of the outstanding years that the Boston Red Sox, Cleveland Indians, California Angels, Cincinnati Reds, Colorado Rockies and Atlanta Braves are having and the young, talented players throughout the leagues, the unsettled business affairs that haunt major league baseball and disillusioned many of its fans. Older fans have been turned off and the younger ones have decided to spend their time and attention on other pursuits.

Meanwhile interest and attendance at minor league baseball games continues. If the Vermont Expos are any indication, fans turned off by the excesses of major league baseball have turned to minor league games. Attendance at Centennial Field for Expos' games is up more than 10 percent and merchandise

sales are booming. It is friendly, fun, and entertaining. I know that I will enjoy taking in a few games during the August recess, if there is an August recess.

As the season began, Bud Selig, baseball's acting commissioner was quoted as saying: "We knew there would be some fallout. It's very tough to assess, but there is a residue from the work stoppage, there's no question. There is a lot of anger out there."

At our February 15 hearing on legislation to end baseball's antitrust exemption, I had asked the acting commissioner how fans get their voices heard. I observed even then: "Fans are disgruntled; I mean, they are really ripped. Do they vote with their feet?" Unfortunately, the strike dragged on, fans suffered through the owners' experiment with so-called replacement teams, and the matter remains unsettled and unsettling.

Mr. Selig answered me last February by observing that when the strike ended, there would be an enormous healing process. I said then: "The longer you go, the harder the healing process is going to be." I say now that major league baseball has gone too far and has been above the law too long.

I do not think that those who are the game's current caretakers appreciate the damage that they have done. Slick advertising, discount tickets, and special giveaway nights will not make up the difference. The last year has been disastrous.

Worse, nothing has been resolved. The problems and differences persist. There is no collective bargaining agreement and, so far as the public is aware, no prospect of one any time soon. To borrow from a famous baseball great, "It ain't over, 'til it's over."

Why should people return to major league ballparks or patronize major league teams if the risk remains of having affections toyed with again and having hopes of a championship dashed—not by a better team but by labor-management problems?

I believe the time has come for the Senate to act. The Senate Antitrust Subcommittee reported the bill to the Judiciary Committee on April 5. This consensus bill, S. 627, is sponsored by Senators HATCH, THURMOND, MOYNIHAN, GRAHAM, and myself. It would cut back baseball's judicially created and aberrational antitrust exemption.

Congress may not be able to solve every problem or heal baseball's self-inflicted wounds, but we can do this: We can pass legislation that will declare that professional baseball can no longer operate above the law. The antitrust laws apply to all other professional sports and commercial activity should apply to professional baseball, as well.

Along with the other members of the Judiciary Committee, I recently received a report of the section on antitrust law of the American Bar Association that examines S. 627. The antitrust section of the ABA reasons that

professional baseball's antitrust exemption is not tailored to achieve well-defined and justified public goals.

The antitrust section, therefore, "supports legislative repeal of the exemption of professional major league baseball from the federal antitrust laws." Moreover, the report notes that putting professional baseball on equal footing with other professional sports and business and having the antitrust laws apply "cannot fairly be criticized as 'taking sides'" in baseball's current labor-management battle.

I look forward to working with our Judiciary Committee chairmen to have our bill, S. 627, considered favorably by the Judiciary Committee at our earliest opportunity and then promptly by the Senate. It is time that the Senate act and end this destructive aberration in our law.●

#### MEDICARE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise both to salute the 30th anniversary of Medicare and to call on the Republicans to release their secret plan to overhaul the system.

Medicare has been an American success story. It has provided health and financial security to millions of American seniors for three decades now. Along with Social Security, Medicare has transformed the retirement years from a time of fear to a time of confidence. Searing anxiety that the next illness would bankrupt you and your children has been replaced by the sure knowledge that a solemn contract will assure you of the care you need.

But now, at a time when we should be celebrating Medicare and discussing how to make it stronger, we are instead discussing draconian cuts and a secret plan to turn the system on its head.

During the last week, word has leaked out in the New York Times and the Washington Post about the Medicare cuts being cobbled together in a back room somewhere over on the House side. According to both reports, the House Republicans have a plan that would give seniors a devil's choice: face \$1,000 a year in additional premiums, co-payments and deductibles or be forced into a health plan that could very well deprive them of the choice of their own doctor.

#### TAX CUT

Why are such wrenching changes being contemplated for Medicare? To pay for a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. The \$270 billion in Medicare cuts are roughly equivalent to the Republican budget's proposed \$245 billion tax cut—more than half of which would flow to people earning more than \$100,000 a year.

The Republican Medicare cuts would not be reinvested back into the system to make it solvent. The majority is not cutting Medicare in order to strengthen it. Hardly one dime of the savings would be put back into the system. Nearly every bit of the savings would

go right out the door as tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

The Republicans also claim that all they want to do is hold Medicare cost increases to the same rate as private health care inflation. But such claims simply ignore the fact that the number of people on Medicare is increasing rapidly, as is the average age. The fastest growing population segment in the United States is people over 85, and these people need a great deal of medical care.

The budget for Medicare must increase simply to keep up with these demographic trends. If it does not, benefits will decline and costs for recipients will increase.

#### SECRET PLAN

According to press reports, that is exactly what the Republicans are planning: increased costs and reduced benefits. Unfortunately, we do not know all the details of the plan because it is being drafted in secret. I joined with a number of my colleagues on the Budget and Finance Committees yesterday in sending a letter to our distinguished Majority Leader asking him to release details of the Republican Medicare plan before the August recess.

I am sympathetic to the occasional need for confidentiality in drafting legislation. I believe, however, that the Republicans have had ample time to come forward with a proposal. It has been nearly 9 months since the Republicans took the majority in Congress and nearly 7 months since they actually took power.

But now we are told they will not unveil their plan for Medicare until September—nearly a full year after they were elected. By that time, there will be little time for hearings, committee consideration or public discussion of these sweeping proposals. The Medicare reforms will likely be folded into the reconciliation bill, which will be considered under special rules limiting debate. We will be under the gun to pass the bill by October 1 in order to keep the Government running.

That is no way to consider the most radical overhaul of Medicare in 30 years. The Republicans must come forward with their plan now so that seniors and their families will have time to digest the proposals and understand what they would mean to them personally and financially. We must have adequate time to weigh this legislation—a few hectic days in late September is not good enough.

#### HIGHER COSTS

As I said, we do not know the exact nature of the Republicans' Medicare cuts because they have not been released. What we do know from reports in the press, however, is quite discouraging.

The Medicare budget would not keep up with medical inflation or the influx of new recipients, and as a result it would cover less and cost more for recipients with each passing year.

The Republicans apparently contemplate transforming Medicare into a