

was first elected to it in 1975. Richard's leadership has helped to shape the vigorous South Dakota livestock industry. His accomplishments are many, too many to list here. But for those of us who know him, it is agreed that his boots will be hard to fill.

Richard Ekstrum has provided me with invaluable advice and counsel throughout my years in the House and Senate. He has been a tireless defender and promoter of South Dakota and American agriculture. After each meeting with him I know exactly what needs to be done. All meetings with him are productive. I will miss his regular advice and leadership, but I am heartened to know he is still just a phone call away.

Richard recently was quoted as saying, "I will always be part of Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau will always be a part of me." Similarly, I would like the RECORD to reflect that Richard Ekstrum will always be a part of South Dakota agriculture, and vice versa.

Richard owns and operates a 3,500 acre general livestock and grain farm near Kimball, SD. He and his two brothers operate this farm, which has a commercial farrow-to-finish hog operation and produces purebred Simmental cattle.

Richard first joined Farm Bureau in 1967 and rose through the ranks of the Brule County Farm Bureau organization to become President of the South Dakota Farm Bureau in 1975. He was elected in 1980 to the Board of Directors of the American Farm Bureau Federation, a position he held for a decade. He has travelled the globe—28 countries in total—to promote and advance American agriculture. He recognizes that the continued strength of American agriculture rests with its ability to compete in the world market place. That is part of the reason why Richard Ekstrum is a recognized and respected national leader in agriculture.

The strength of the Farm Bureau organization is rooted on the farm. The history of the South Dakota Farm Bureau is impressive. As early as 1913, several county Farm Bureaus were organized and operating in South Dakota. In 1917, the operating county Farm Bureaus formed the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation. Today the South Dakota Farm Bureau is my State's leading agricultural organization and a highly regarded voice for South Dakota farmers and ranchers.

Much of the success of the South Dakota Farm Bureau can be attributed to Richard Ekstrum. Under his leadership the organization witnessed its largest membership growth. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, membership averaged 3,100 farm families. During the 1970's, its programs were expanded and since 1977 family membership in the South Dakota Farm Bureau has grown each and every year to the point where it represents more than 10,000 South Dakota farm and ranch families.

One of the many programs sponsored by the farm bureau and strongly promoted by Richard is the South Dakota Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee. This group provides opportunities for greater participation by young, active farmers and ranchers. It helps young farm bureau members analyze their particular agricultural problems and collectively find solutions that best meet their needs. I am very pleased with the success of this program. I have said on many occasions that we need to do more to promote the promise of farming for younger generations. These young people represent the future of South Dakota agriculture.

Richard Ekstrum and the South Dakota Farm Bureau are committed to the goal of improving net farm income and strengthening the quality of rural life. I commend Richard for his loyalty to and hard work for the South Dakota Farm Bureau. He has left his mark on the landscape of South Dakota agriculture and his community. His wife Agnes and his two daughters can be truly proud. I know Richard will continue to be active in his church, in civic and private organizations, the South Dakota Farm Bureau and in South Dakota agriculture.

Richard is known for saying, "Of all the hats that I wear, I like the one of being a farmer the best." Today, on behalf of all South Dakotans, I take my hat off to Richard Ekstrum.

As I stated before, the wonders of American agriculture tell a story that is not told often enough. It is a story of proud Americans, like Richard Ekstrum, who do their part in the world's most proficient industry, day after day. I enjoyed and will continue to tell the many stories of South Dakota men and women who contribute to the greatest story ever told—American agriculture.

TRIBUTE TO THE CHATTANOOGA RONALD McDONALD HOUSE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and commend the Chattanooga Ronald McDonald House, which will celebrate its fifth anniversary in a "Blaze of Glory" this weekend.

The Ronald McDonald Houses provide a loving atmosphere for seriously ill children to be close to their families while they are cared for in a nearby hospital. Often, these houses are considered to be the families' home away from home during these hardships. The "House That Love Built," which is the name of the Chattanooga Ronald McDonald House, has assisted almost 1,800 families from 32 States and 2 foreign countries, and is 1 of 162 Ronald McDonald Houses in the United States.

This weekend will mark the fifth anniversary for the Chattanooga Ronald McDonald House. They will celebrate the anniversary by burning the recently resolved mortgage on the house in a "Blaze of Glory." Mr. President, I

would like to thank the staff, the more than 300 volunteers and the donors that have made the "House That Love Built" a safe and useful tool in treatment of our catastrophically ill children. Their combined efforts will not go unnoticed, and I wish them well in their celebration this weekend.

OWENSBORO LEGENDS OF RACING HOMECOMING

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, anytime someone from our hometown gains national recognition for their talents, we all feel a sense of pride and ownership—that somehow we've contributed to that success.

I know all those from the city of Owensboro and from Daviess County will be doing their share of boasting during the Owensboro Legends of Racing Homecoming.

It provides us with a chance to show off some of our homegrown talent, and to thank these racers and crew members for representing our community so well in competitions across the country.

I know all Kentuckians are just as proud as I am of Darrell and Michael Waltrip, Jeremy Mayfield, and the Green boys—David, Jeff, and Mark. Any weekend we turn on the television and watch the NASCAR races, we enjoy it that much more knowing that they're successes reflect so well on Owensboro, and our entire State.

Working closely with the NASCAR drivers are nine pit crew members from Owensboro and Daviess County who have achieved the highest level of success in their field. I want to congratulate Jeff Chandler, Kenneth Davis, Kerry Everly, Terry Mayfield, Stephen McCain, Donnie Richeson, Barry Swift, Bobby Waltrip, and Todd Wilkerson for their hard work and excellent performances.

They're part of one of the fastest growing sports today. It's estimated that attendance records will double, with 6 million fans expected to go to the races this year.

These are all men of excellent character, who've demonstrated what can be accomplished with hard work and dedication. I join all Kentuckians in congratulating not only them, but their families, who have stood by and supported these racers and pit crew members over the years. I couldn't be more proud of their achievements, and I wish them continued success in the future.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, as of the close of business yesterday, November 15, the Federal debt stood at \$4,988,340,050,374.57. We are still about \$12 billion away from the \$5 trillion mark. Unfortunately, we anticipate hitting this mark sometime later this year or early next year.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman and child in America owes \$18,935.82 as his or her share of that debt.

CONGRESS WILL PROTECT AMERICA'S VETERANS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, we paused last week, as we do each November 11th, to honor American veterans who have given so much to their country for the cause of freedom. As a nation, we stop on Veterans Day to express our gratitude for their service and their sacrifice. And it is worth questioning whether the freedom which we embrace in America would have spread across the world had those sacrifices not been made.

Because of their profound love for their country, veterans understand better than many people how important it is that we face the problems plaguing this Nation. "Congress is doing exactly what I want it to do, in spite of some who oppose the progress we are making," wrote a disabled veteran from Shoreview, MN, who urged me to continue pressing for a balanced budget.

So in much the same way Americans once united during wartime, we are now united in peace, working together as a nation to create a Government strong enough to meet the needs of its veterans today, while it safeguards the freedom our veterans ensured for us.

That is why I find it so appalling that veterans would be singled out by the President and his administration to be the latest political pawns in their budget maneuverings.

Mr. President, I have received a copy of a press release issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs just 2 days ago, and I am utterly disgusted by the scare tactics it employs and the blatant misrepresentations it contains.

"Nearly 3.6 million veterans, widows, and children may have to wait on their monthly benefits checks due to the Government shutdown," it begins. "Unfortunately, some veterans and their families may become budget casualties," said VA Secretary Jesse Brown.

Suggesting that veterans—many of whom sustained grave injuries and lost close friends and family members in battle—could become casualties themselves, this time of a budget war, is tasteless and extreme. It is shocking to me that the U.S. Government would dishonor our veterans this way, playing on their fears and resorting to these kinds of tactics in an attempt to score political points for the President.

In his press release, Secretary Brown claims that all President Clinton has asked for from Congress is a stopgap spending bill free of controversial riders. That is precisely what Congress will deliver to the President this week—a stopgap bill that gives him the funds he needs to run the Government, and asks him to pledge he will work together with Congress to balance the budget within 7 years. Yet even before he sees our bill, President Clinton is vowing to veto it.

Mr. President, the men and women who have so proudly served in this Nation's Armed Forces will not be left in the cold, and to suggest that the Gov-

ernment would ever allow that to happen is the height of irresponsibility. By signing the temporary spending legislation this Congress is preparing to send to the White House, veterans benefits would be designated as an essential Government service. I urge the President to do so, so that this Nation's veterans will continue to receive their monthly benefit checks on schedule and without delay.

The press release from the Department of Veterans Affairs, however, underscores the lengths this administration is willing to go as they attempt to derail our efforts to balance the budget. But do not be taken in by the political rhetoric—it is inflammatory and it is harsh, but it is nothing but rhetoric. A similar situation occurred earlier this year, when the President tried to gain some political mileage scaring senior citizens with his Medicare misinformation. And so it was only a matter of time before he would go after the Nation's veterans, too.

It is indeed unfortunate that this President is so out of touch with the military and the sacrifices demanded by those who serve in uniform that he would attempt to frighten American veterans in such a manner.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to join me in denouncing these desperate tactics. They disgrace our veterans and serve no useful purpose in the very serious debate over the financial future of this great Nation.

REPORT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1996— MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT— PM 96

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

To the Congress of the United States:

In declaring my intention to disapprove House Joint Resolution 122, the further continuing resolution for fiscal year 1996, I stated my desire to approve promptly a clean extension of the continuing resolution that expired on November 13. Accordingly, I am forwarding the enclosed legislation that would provide for such an extension. This legislation also provides that all Federal employees furloughed during the Government shutdown through no fault of their own will be compensated at their ordinary rate for the period of the furlough.

I urge the Congress to act on this legislation promptly and to return it to me for signing.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 16, 1995.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 122. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 395. An act to authorize and direct the Secretary of Energy to sell the Alaska Power Administration, and to authorize the export of Alaska North Slope crude oil, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

At 3:47 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2126) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1598. A communication from the Director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a cost comparison study of Vendor Pay function supporting the Defense Commissary Agency; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1599. A communication from the Chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the status of internal audit and investigative activities for fiscal year 1995; to the Committee on Armed Services.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-466. A resolution adopted by the Salinas City Firefighters of Salinas, CA, relative to the Ward Valley of the East Mojave; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-467. A petition from the attorney general of the State of Hawaii relative to proposed legislation entitled "The Medicare Preservation Act of 1995"; to the Committee on Finance.

POM-468. A petition from a citizen of the State of Kansas for a redress of grievances; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-469. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Michigan; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

"SENATE RESOLUTION No. 30.

"A resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States regarding voluntary, individual, unorganized, and non-mandatory prayer in public schools.