But to truly understand propane, you must take a hard look at the makeup of the industry. The industry is only 165 producers strong with about 5,000 retail marketers. The resources necessary to implement a strong research and development program for this industry are limited.

That's where the Propane Education and Efficiency Act comes into focus. PERA provides the propane industry an opportunity to establish a checkoff program that would collect one-tenth of one cent per gallon of the wholesale cost of propane. The proceeds would go toward a fund designed for research and development, education and safety.

Propane is the only energy source that is not supported by Federal research dollars. This industry-financed program gives an industry with limited resources the opportunity to enhance their product without coming to the Federal trough for help.

I commend the leadership of propane industry in North Carolina and the Nation as a whole for recognizing their needs and taking the initiative to find a solution that will work without an increased burden on taxpayers.

As an original cosponsor of this bill, I thank Senator DOMENICI for his willingness to introduce this important piece of legislation. I stand ready to assist my good friend from Arizona in any way to see that this bill moves forward.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and as a proud Virginian, it is my pleasure to commend a fellow Virginian, Mr. John Kluge of Charlottsville, VA, for his contribution to the Library of Congress.

Born in Chemnitz, Germany, Mr. Kluge came to America when he was 8 years old and has become one of the Nation's most successful and highly regarded businessmen and one of its most generous humanitarians.

In 1990, John Kluge became the first chairman of the James Madison Council of the Library of Congress. The Madison Council, the Library's first private-sector support group in its 190-year history, plays a vital role in raising the visibility of the Library and promoting awareness and use of its collections. Its members include leaders in business, society, and philanthropy from across the Nation who are known for their commitment to education and scholarship. In its short history the Madison Council has funded over 50 programs, including fellowships for young scholars, publications and television programs, public exhibitions, scholarly conferences, centers of excellence that draw top thinkers to the Library to use and enhance its collections, a special acquisitions fund, and much more. Just recently, the council reached its goal of 100 founding members, set by John Kluge 6 years ago.

John Kluge has been the foremost private donor in the Library's history, personally giving nearly $8 million to the Library. His biggest single contribution was $5 million for the National Digital Library, which is the brainchild of the Librarian of Congress, James Billington. Launched in 1994 with commitments of support from the Congress and private donors like Mr. Kluge, the National Digital Library is providing free unique content for the information superhighway opening new gateways to education for all Americans. Other projects to which John Kluge has contributed generously include the magnificent Vatican Library exhibition, the Leadership Development Program, an exhibition of heretofore unseen documents from the Soviet state archives, and purchase of a major collection of sound recordings.

By personally working on behalf of the Library of Congress, arranging meetings with potential supporters, giving of his own personal time, and bringing together an outstanding group of distinguished individuals who truly care about their national library and support it with their time, ideas, and financial contributions, John Kluge has made the Madison Council what it is today—a model of how the private sector can focus its resources within a public institution and make an important difference.

Because of John Kluge, millions more Americans know about our Nation's great Library which Congress has built and supported for almost 200 years, and they understand its importance in the history of our Nation.

John Kluge is one of the great philanthropists in America today. His contributions to the Library of Congress and the Nation have been immense. It is my privilege to commend him for his achievements.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong disappointment that the Republican leadership will not allow a straight up-or-down vote on legislation to increase the Federal minimum wage. The Congress is long overdue in acting upon legislation which would establish a more realistic wage standard for the American worker and I would hope that the Senate has the opportunity to express its will on this matter—one so critical to working families—in the near future.

It would seem to me that the issue is a relatively simple one. As many of my colleagues will recall, under the Bush administration, the Senate voted overwhelming to enact an increase similar to the one being proposed today. In 1989, by a vote of 89–8, the Senate approved legislation which raised the minimum wage by 45 cents in 1990 and again in 1991 to bring it to its current level of $4.25 per hour. The proposal being put forth by myself and others would enact the same increase—45 cents this year and another 45 cents in 1997—raising the minimum wage to $5.15. It is my strongly held view that such an action, like that taken in the 101st Congress, would appropriately reflect the values and beliefs at the very core of our society—the idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, you deserve the opportunity to get ahead.

In my own State of Maryland, the city of Baltimore has been at the forefront of efforts to assure hard-working Marylanders receive a decent living wage. Just last year, Baltimore's Mayor Kurt Schmoke signed the Nation's first prevailing wage law which stipulates that all new or renegotiated contracts with the city of Baltimore must provide a minimum wage of at least $6.10 per hour. Baltimore's ground-breaking public policy initiative should serve as an example to cities across the Nation and, in my view, provides an ideal model for the U.S. Congress.

As we all well know, the real value of the minimum wage has deteriorated markedly since 1979. At its current level of $4.25 per hour, the minimum wage will fall to its lowest real value in 40 years if Congress fails to take action. In the late 1950's the real value of the minimum wage was worth more than $5 per hour by today's standards and in the mid-1960's it peaked at $6.28. However, Congress' failure to respond to inflation over the past 20 years has resulted in a 27-percent decline in the real value of the minimum wage since 1979 and a 50-cent drop since 1991. Since April 1991, the cost of living has risen 11 percent while the minimum wage has remained constant at $4.25.

The decrease in the value of the minimum wage has served to widen the gulf between the wealthiest and the poorest of our society. In an effort to offset this decline, I strongly supported President Clinton's expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC] which raised the income of 15 million households—helping many rise above the poverty line. However, this is not enough. Even with the EITC expansion, a family of three with one full-time wage earner working year round at the current minimum wage brings home $8,500 and could receive a tax credit of $3,400 for a total annual income of $11,900. According to the Congressional Budget Office [CBO], the poverty level for a family of three in the United States stands at approximately $12,557. Therefore, at the current minimum wage, workers can work full-time for an entire year, qualify for the EITC and still fall some $657 below the poverty line. While the EITC is a critically important public policy initiative to assist low-income families, it should not be viewed as a substitute for a consistent, decent wage.

Opponents of increasing the minimum wage frequently argue that the typical minimum wage earner is a teenager simply working after school or on the weekends to earn a little extra spending money and that the Government should not be supplementing the incomes of this group of temporary, part-time workers. The truth, however, is that more than 70 percent of all minimum wage earners are adults over 19 years of age and the vast majority—58 percent—are women. Clearly, these are hard-working individuals trying to make a living and support a family on a wage that fails to allow them to even meet the poverty standard, let alone surpass it.

At a time when salaries of CEO's of major companies have increased by more than 20 percent and the congressional leadership is talking about giving tax breaks to some of the most well-off in our Nation, I find it completely unreasonable that an attempt to increase this basic standard for the working poor would be resisted.

Some argue that the economy cannot afford an increase in the minimum wage; that an increase in the minimum wage would ultimately rob the economy of jobs and income as businesses would be forced to pay fewer workers more. This is simply not true. A close review of recent evidence clearly demonstrates that a reasonable increase in the minimum wage does not result in huge job losses. A frequently cited 1992 study in which Princeton economists David Card and Alan Krueger examined the effects of a minimum wage increase in New Jersey found ''no evidence'' that a rise in New Jersey's minimum wage reduced employment opportunity. In fact, just the opposite was true. In comparing employment trends in New Jersey with those in Pennsylvania, Card and Krueger found the employment trends to be stronger in New Jersey, the State with the higher minimum wage. Similarly, Harvard economist Richard Freeman found in his 1994 study that ''moderate legislated increases did not reduce employment and were, if anything, associated with higher employment in some locales.''

Mr. President, it is clear that the American economy cannot only afford a reasonable rise in the minimum wage, but could actually benefit from such an increase. In fact, it stands to reason that more money in the pocket of the American worker means that more money is being spent and purchasing power is increased. The minimum wage proposal now before us would give the American worker an additional $1,872 in annual income. In Maryland alone, it would mean an increase in income for more than 131,000 workers. It may not sound like much to some in this Chamber, but it can make all the difference to a family struggling to heat their home, pay for groceries, or provide adequate health care for their children.

While economic considerations are an important aspect of this debate, neglecting to recognize the fundamental value of ensuring a living wage for American workers would compromise principles I believe to be integral to the fabric of our society. Historically, Congress has acted to guarantee minimum standards of decency for working Americans. Measures to protect workers from unsafe and unfair working conditions were enacted under the belief that, as a society, we should support a basic standard of living for all Americans. It is in this spirit that minimum wage laws have been updated through the years.

As long as we in Congress fail to act, we send the message to working families across the country that hard work and sound living are not enough. Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage earners are adults who are struggling to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. The objective of the minimum wage is to make work pay well enough to keep families out of poverty and off Government assistance. An hourly rate of $4.25 is not enough to cover the average living expenses of a family of three. It is unthinkable that in what is arguably the wealthiest Nation in the world, there are families out there right now having to choose between food for their children and heat for their homes. If a family of three can barely get by on $4.25 an hour, how can a single mother—trying to stay off welfare—be expected to be able to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care and child care on the current minimum wage? Instead of maintaining barriers to self-sufficiency, we should be helping to tear them down.

Mr. President, Americans want to work. They want to be able to adequately provide for themselves and their families. But they are working harder for less and are becoming increasingly frustrated in the process. It is critical that we recognize the reality of minimum wage earners and take steps to help them rise above poverty. President Roosevelt once called for ''a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.'' The American worker deserves no less. Many of those who supported the minimum wage increase in 1989 are here today and I would urge them to join me in calling for vote on this important measure.

UNITED STATES/FRANCE AVIATION RELATIONS

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important issue of United States aviation relations with the Government of France. Although the immediate crisis concerning the upcoming schedule for the summer season apparently has been resolved, I remain very concerned about the state of U.S./French aviation relations.

As a result of France's decision in 1992 to renounce the bilateral aviation agreement that existed between our two countries, France currently is our only major aviation trading partner with whom we do not have an air service agreement. In the absence of such an agreement, U.S. and French carriers continue to fly between our two countries, but they do so solely at the pleasure of each government and without the necessary flexibility to increase or change service when market demand warrants. Essentially, U.S./French air service is frozen as if the clock stopped in 1992.

In a speech before the International Aviation Club of Washington last month, I spoke at some length about the fires of air service liberalization burning brightly on the European continent. In hailing the enormously important U.S./German open skies agreement signed several weeks ago, I noted that nearly 40 percent of U.S. travel to Europe will now go to or connect through open skies markets. I ask unanimous consent that the text of the speech to which I referred be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. PRESSLER. Although this wave of air service liberalization touches France on three of its borders, France stands seemingly oblivious to the competitive air service forces besieging it. The fact of the matter is while its European neighbors are reaching out to embrace the future of global aviation with the enlightened view that the economic benefits of an open skies relationship with the United States are a two-way street, France continues to cling to the past. This choice is not without significant adverse consequences for France's economy.

So what precisely is France's air service policy with respect to the United States? It appears that policy can be best described as ''managed stagnation.'' In an attempt to rebalance the market share of state-owned Air France vis-a-vis the highly competitive U.S. carriers, France has made the unfortunate decision to forego the tremendous air service growth other European countries are experiencing in their air service relationships with the United States. Ironically, some of the lucrative new air service opportunities European countries now enjoy are the direct result of traffic that France's restrictive air service policy has driven away to other countries.

According to a recent statement by Anne-Marie Idrac, the French State Secretary for Transport, France ''is not any worse off'' for its decision to renounce the U.S./French air service agreement. Economic analysis, however, paints a far different—and quite sobering—picture. In fact, this analysis shows France's policy of managed stagnation is a recipe with a very bad aftertaste for the French economy. Let me explain.

First, the adverse economic consequences of France's air service policy is best illustrated by a comparison with the recent experiences of the Netherlands. In 1991, both the U.S./French and U.S./Dutch air service markets experienced tremendous growth. Scheduled passenger traffic grew 21 percent and 14 percent respectively. In 1992, however, aviation relations with France and the Netherlands turned abruptly in opposite directions. Around