

the excellent example provided by Otawa County. The care and generosity of her people, the grounding of daily life in faith, and traditional values that are so much a part of this wonderful county should inspire us all to greater efforts.

The naysayers are being proved wrong every day. Americans can and will help one another if only the Federal Government will give back the freedom they need to do so.●

#### CHILD SOLDIERS

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of the Senate a profoundly disturbing report issued by Human Rights Watch on July 18 about the abduction of children by a heavily armed Ugandan rebel group called the Lord's Resistance Army.

While the precise number of children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army is unknown, estimates indicate that over the past 2 years, 3 to 5 thousand children have escaped from the rebel group. It is reported that an equal number of abducted children remain in captivity and an unknown number have died.

According to Human Rights Watch, abduction is only the beginning of the extreme violence and degradation faced by these children. Often as young as 8 years old, the children are tortured, raped, and sometimes killed by members of the Lord's Resistance Army. They are forced to take part in combat, serving as front line forces in battles against the Ugandan Army and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army. The children also tell of being made to beat and kill fellow captives who have been apprehended in their efforts to escape. The physical and emotional trauma resulting from such experiences can cause lifelong problems to those children that do survive.

The abduction of children for military purposes not only violates the provisions of common article 3 of the Geneva conventions of 1949, international standards established by protocol II to the Geneva conventions of 1949, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child, it violates the most basic principles of human morality.

It is reported that the camps established by the Ugandan Government to contend with displaced children and their families are extremely inadequate. Crowded conditions and a lack of food and sanitation facilities have resulted in malnutrition, disease, and death among those who have sought refuge in these camps. Trauma counseling centers for children who have escaped from the rebels are sorely in need of basic supplies and qualified staff. Human Rights Watch reports that the children who are told to leave in order to make room for new arrivals often have nowhere to go and no means of support.

Mr. President, the phenomenon of the child soldier is growing not only in Uganda, but around the world. If a

more concerted effort is not made to address the outrageous abuses these children face, Uganda and the rest of the international community will be contending with the consequences far in the future.●

#### TRIBUTE TO VERMONT EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Vermont Educational Television, or Vermont ETV as it is known, on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. The station, which is a member of the Public Broadcasting Service, will begin to celebrate its long track record of success in October. A series of brief clips will be shown throughout the year to take a look back at some of the more memorable moments in its programming.

Vermont ETV understands that learning is a lifelong process. Through community support, this station is able to provide exceptional programming 24 hours a day with something for every age group. Some of my favorite shows are produced locally by Vermont ETV, presenting a unique perspective for issues and events important to people in the region. The station's impeccable selection of shows provides both an entertainment and educational value for all Vermonters.

Of noteworthy importance is their efforts to address the needs of pre-school children through the Ready To Learn and Early Education Initiative. In close cooperation with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as well as the Department of Education, these programs are designed to assist children and prepare them for the challenges they will face in school. Vermont ETV is dedicated to providing children, from a wide array of backgrounds, with the opportunity to start off on equal ground.

Vermont ETV is one of the finest examples of a successful community partnership, with almost 78% of its budget financed through donations from the public. I believe that Vermont ETV sets the standard similar stations in other States should strive to emulate. That is why I have been an active supporter for over 20 years. I would like to extend my congratulations and best wishes to Vermont ETV, its employees as well as its supporters, for many more years of continued success.●

#### CHARISSE TILLMAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, on October 13, the United States and more than 150 nations will mark the observance of World Food Day. Every year since 1980, World Food Day has been a time to raise awareness of worldwide hunger, and recognize those who have dedicated their lives to help people in need.

Many of the individuals who are fighting the war against hunger do so

through the World Food Program [WFP]. The WFP is the largest international food aid organization in the world. Last year, 45 million people in 84 countries benefited from the 2.2 million tons of food distributed by the WFP.

The southern part of Sudan is an example of a region where the WFP helps alleviate the suffering and illnesses caused by hunger. The situation in the Sudan is extremely desperate and countless children have died due to starvation.

One person who deserves special mention is Charisse Tillman of Culver City, CA. She is an assessment coordinator for the WFP in Sudan. When a village or a community is targeted by the WFP for assistance, Ms. Tillman is one of the first to arrive on the scene. She determines how much food is needed by the community and much it can actually produce. This is extremely important so that WFP does not in any way discourage local agricultural production.

The World Food Program is home to many dedicated people like Charisse Tillman. I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring her and all the unselfish humanitarians at the WFP.●

#### CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, America's greatest asset is its people, and what makes the American population unlike any other country's is our diversity. No other nation draws strength from so many different cultures, and the American population is a mosaic of the world's many nationalities. Through time, the traditions from these many nations have become part of our own society, enriching our national culture. But our Nation would not be nearly as strong without the contributions of Americans who are of Hispanic descent. In recognition of these contributions, our Nation is currently celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

Hispanic Heritage Month provides a wonderful opportunity for us to honor the diverse achievements and contributions of Hispanics in this country. I know that in my home State of Connecticut there have been parades and dances to mark this occasion, as well as readings of works by Hispanic authors at public libraries. All of these events give Hispanic-Americans a deeper appreciation for their roots, and make all Americans more aware of the contributions that Hispanics make to our Nation.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand and appreciate the extent to which Hispanics have become entwined in the American landscape would come from reading the newspaper. On the front page, you could read an article about our Secretary of Energy or the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations who are both Hispanic. In the business section you could read an article on the Latino Administrator of the Small Business Administration who released

a report showing that the number of new businesses owned by Hispanic women has grown at three times the overall rate of business growth. In the arts section you could read about a recital by a Spanish guitarist playing flamenco music at a local theater. The food section could have an writeup of a new Mexican restaurant that just opened up downtown. And in the Sports section you could read about the Major League Baseball playoffs where every single team has Hispanic players that are responsible for their team's success. In fact, in the Washington Post sports pages you could read coverage of World Cup Soccer, in Spanish.

When we talk about Hispanics and how their contributions make our Nation more vibrant and diverse, it is important that we recognize the great diversity that exists within the Hispanic community itself. Hispanic-Americans come from a variety of nations, ranging from Central America to South America to Europe to the Caribbean.

What unites Hispanic-Americans is a fundamental respect for the traditions and values of their native lands combined with a strong commitment to the American dream. Life in America requires that they strike a balance between embracing their roots and assimilating into this new culture. Reaching this balance can be a struggle, but it is a struggle that will leave them enriched as individuals, while at the same time enriching our Nation.

Hispanic-Americans should take great pride in their heritage, and I am glad that Hispanic Heritage Month gives our Nation an opportunity to honor and celebrate their contributions.●

#### EXPLANATION OF VOTES ON THE FY98 INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, a few weeks ago the Senate finished consideration of the Fiscal Year 1998 Interior appropriations bill. I would like to speak for a moment on the amendments to this legislation.

One of the first amendments to be considered was offered by Senator BRYAN of Nevada. The Bryan amendment proposed to cut \$10 million from the Forest Service's timber roads construction budget and to eliminate the Purchaser Credit Program. As I understand it, Senator BRYAN believes the monies used by the Forest Service to assist with the construction and maintenance of roads used by loggers constitutes a subsidy and he targets it accordingly. Proponents of this program, however, argue that there is no road subsidy because the Forest Service takes possession of the roads after the timber harvest and uses them to fight forest fires, manage the forestlands and provide recreational access.

The Purchaser Credit Program, meanwhile, credits timber companies for the cost to build roads when it bids out a timber sale. The logging com-

pany will then build the roads, harvest the timber and pay the Forest Service for the timber minus the cost of the road. Meanwhile, that same company is able to use the credit it received from the first sale to bid on other timber sales. The ability to use this credit toward other timber sales benefit is particularly beneficial to small logging companies with limited capital. Elimination of this program, therefore, would do little to reduce logging on federal lands, but would greatly reduce the ability of small timber companies to bid on timber sales.

Finally, I am concerned that the Bryan amendment could make it even more difficult to conduct timber sales on Forest Service lands. In the past decade, timber sales on federal lands have declined by over two-thirds. Timber harvests on private lands have necessarily increased in order to make up for the lost wood. Private timber harvests have proven insufficient to meet market demand, however, and the shortfalls are increasingly being made up with imported, Canadian lumber. If this trend continues, I fear that the resulting timber shortages will raise the price per board-foot of lumber and increase housing and furniture costs.

Nevertheless, while I opposed the 49-51 vote to table the Bryan amendment, I reserve the right to reconsider my vote on this issue in the future. At this time, I am concerned, but not convinced, that the timber program represents a subsidy to the timber industry. In order to clarify this question, I urge the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to hold hearings on this issue.

The Senate next turned to consideration of a Hutchinson amendment to authorize the President to implement the recently announced American Heritage Rivers Initiative subject to Congressional approval. The goal of this amendment was both to ensure that Congress has a say in such designation and define what constitutes a river community.

Proposed by the President, the American Heritage Rivers Initiative seeks to identify polluted rivers which are important to this nation's history and provide a new avenue for funding cleanup efforts. While I believe this amendment was well-intentioned, after careful review I became convinced that the Hutchinson amendment would actually serve to greatly increase the cost for a community to designate their river as an American Heritage site. As long as property owners are assured of their rights, the American Heritage Rivers Initiative could play a significant role in cleaning up some of this nation's most polluted rivers. In order to keep the Heritage River designation a viable option for Michigan's rivers, I voted in support of the motion to table the Hutchinson amendment which passed on a 57-42 vote.

Shortly after dispensing with the Hutchinson amendment, the Senate took up a Kyl Amendment to provide

\$4.8 million for law enforcement to combat gangs on Indian Tribal Lands. While these gangs have yet to present themselves in Michigan, states such as Arizona are having to confront this problem with increasing frequency. In an effort to address this problem before it becomes a national phenomenon, I supported Senator KYL's amendment. Nevertheless, it was defeated on a 34-64 vote.

The next legislation to be considered was a Bumpers amendment to impose a royalty of five percent of the net return on the profits from mining gold, silver and platinum. In addition, in order to raise funds to pay for the cleanup of abandoned mines, the amendment would also charge a reclamation fee for those mines which have patented their lands.

In his speech on the Senate floor, Senator BUMPERS indicated that the reclamation fee served as a much needed tax on the industry. Shortly after, a point of order was raised which noted that the introduction of a tax measure such as this in the Senate was unconstitutional. A vote was called to determine the merit of the point of order. Whether Senator BUMPERS legislation had merit or not, it was clear to me that the amendment did violate the Constitutional law stating all tax measures must originate in the House of Representatives. I agreed that the Point of Order was well taken and, on a 59-39 vote, the Bumpers amendment was deemed out of order.

Shortly after disposing of the Bumpers Amendment, the Senate turned to final consideration of the FY98 Interior Appropriations bill. I was pleased to support its 93-3 passage and urge the conferees to work as quickly as possible to finalize the conference report before the end of the fiscal year.

#### APPOINTMENT BY THE VICE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, in accordance with 22 U.S.C. 1928a-1928d, as amended, appoints the Senator from Utah [Mr. BENNETT] as a member of the Senate Delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly during the First Session of the 105th Congress, to be held in Bucharest, Romania, October 9-14, 1997.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO FILE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE REPORTED ITEMS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, October 15, committees have from the hours of 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in order to file legislative or executive reported items.

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