

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Ela Yazzie-King, of Arizona, to be a Member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Terry D. Garcia, of California, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Eva M. Plaza, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

THE JUDICIARY

Rodney W. Sippel, of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern and Western District of Missouri.

Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Bruce C. Kauffman, of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

James William Blagg, of Texas, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Texas for the term of 4 years.

G. Douglas Jones, of Alabama, to be U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama for the term of 4 years.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Robert M. Walker, of Tennessee, to be Under Secretary of the Army.

Jerry MacArthur Hultin, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of the Navy.

F. Whitten Peters, of the District of Columbia, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the U.S. officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force, to the grade indicated under title 10, United States Code, section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Ronald A. Turner, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be general

Lt. Gen. John P. Jumper, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Frank B. Campbell, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. David W. McIlvoy, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Lansford E. Trapp, Jr., 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. David J. McCloud, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the U.S. Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Patrick K. Gamble, 0000

IN THE ARMY

The following Army National Guard of the U.S. officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, United States Code, section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Howard L. Goodwin, 0000

The following named officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grades indicated under title 10, United States Code, section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. David R. Bockel, 0000

Brig. Gen. James G. Browder, Jr., 0000

Brig. Gen. Melvin R. Johnson, 0000

Brig. Gen. J. Craig Larson, 0000

Brig. Gen. Rodney D. Ruddock, 0000

To be brigadier general

Col. Celia L. Adolphi, 0000

Col. Donna F. Barbish, 0000

Col. Emile P. Bataille, 0000

Col. Joel G. Blanchette, 0000

Col. George F. Bowman, 0000

Col. Gary R. DiLallo, 0000

Col. Douglas O. Dollar, 0000

Col. Russell A. Eggers, 0000

Col. Sam E. Gibson, 0000

Col. Fred S. Haddad, 0000

Col. Karol A. Kennedy, 0000

Col. Dennis E. Klein, 0000

Col. Duane L. May, 0000

Col. Robert S. Silverthorn, Jr., 0000

Col. James T. Spivey, Jr., 0000

Col. William B. Watson, Jr., 0000

Col. Charles E. Wilson, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, United States Code, section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. David R. Irvine, 0000

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointments in the U.S. Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, United States Code, section 601:

To be vice admiral

Vice Adm. William J. Fallon, 0000

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Robert M. McNamara, Jr., of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Navy nominations beginning MATTHEW B. AARON, and ending THOMAS A. ZWOLFER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on October 29, 1997.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

ORDERS FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1997

Mr. CRAIG. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until the hour of 1 p.m. on Sunday, November 9. I further ask that on Sunday,

immediately following the prayer, the routine requests through the morning hour be granted.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, tomorrow it is the hope that the omnibus appropriations bill will be cleared for action by the Senate. A rollcall vote is anticipated. However, I would not expect that vote to occur prior to 1:30 p.m.

The Senate intends to consider and complete action on the following: the FDA reform conference report and legislative or executive items cleared for action. Therefore, Members can anticipate rollcall votes throughout Sunday's session of the Senate.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CRAIG. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order, following remarks of Senator GRASSLEY and Senator CHAFEE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Rhode Island.

PROMOTION OF ADOPTION, SAFETY, AND SUPPORT FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN ACT

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I would like to express my strong support for legislation we considered this evening, the Promotion of Adoption, Safety, and Support for Abused and Neglected Children, the so-called PASS Act. This bill, which I introduced along with Senators CRAIG, ROCKEFELLER, DEWINE, COATS, JEFFORDS, and others, will make some critical changes to the child welfare system, changes which will vastly improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of children currently in foster care and waiting for adoptive homes.

We have been working on this legislation for the past year, and I am very pleased we were able to work out a proposal that everyone could support. The primary goal of this so-called PASS Act is to ensure that abused and neglected children are in safe, permanent settings. About a half a million children who have been abused or neglected currently live outside their homes, either in foster care or with relatives. In Rhode Island, there are nearly 1,500 children who have been removed from their homes and are in foster care. Many of these children will be able to return to their parents, but others will not.

Under the current system, children remain in foster care an average of 3 years. Mr. President, I call to your attention and that of everyone who may be interested in this subject, a child in foster care on the average remains there 3 years before any decision is

made about that child's future. And in some cases the wait is even longer. It is time we put a stop to this, and our bill does that.

The PASS Act directs States to shorten this time, all the while ensuring that the child's health and safety are guaranteed. Our bill removes unnecessary geographic barriers to adoption, and requires criminal record checks for all prospective foster and adoptive parents, and other adults living in the household. It allows children to be freed for adoption more quickly in extreme cases, such as when the parents have murdered another child, and requires States to document efforts to move children into safe adoptive homes.

The PASS Act also contains some important provisions that will go a long way toward helping to find homes for so-called special needs children. Lack of medical coverage is a huge barrier to families who want to adopt special needs children. Many of these children have significant physical and mental health problems due to years of abuse, neglect, or foster care. Parents who adopt these children are taking huge financial risks. If these children are not guaranteed health insurance, there will be great reluctance in many cases for the prospective parents to adopt these children. Our bill ensures that special needs children who are going to be adopted will have medical coverage. We also ensure that children whose adopted parents die, or whose adoptions are disrupted in some fashion, will continue to receive Federal subsidies when they are adopted by new parents.

Finally, our bill reauthorizes and provides a modest increase for the Family Preservation and Support Program, which is a worthwhile program that prevents children from having to be removed from their homes.

This is a good bill. The sponsors have worked long and hard to come up with this compromise. We have talked with the House about the minor differences between our bills and it appears we will be able to quickly conference and pass this bill, hopefully before the Senate goes out this year.

In closing, let me thank and congratulate the Members of the PASS coalition who worked so tirelessly on the measure. Senators CRAIG, ROCKEFELLER, DEWINE, COATS, JEFFORDS, and others have made enormous contributions toward this initiative. This would not have happened without their dedication to the children who we are trying to move from foster care into adoptive homes.

I also thank Chairman ROTH of the Finance Committee for helping us to move quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I also want to congratulate this body for the passage of the adoption bill. It is a good step forward. I hope when we

work out the differences between the House and Senate, they can be worked out amicably. I hope there is not a watering down of the Senate provisions.

I would also like to have legislation passed yet this year. If it can't be worked out that way, obviously it is going to have to be put off until next year until it can be conferenced, but I hope we can work out these differences yet this year.

A pioneer in the adoption field wrote "when a child of the streets stands before you in rags, with tear-stained face, you cannot easily forget him, and yet you are perplexed what to do. The human soul is difficult to interfere with. You hesitate how far you should go."

Congress has been considering adoption and foster care reform this year that has caused all of us involved to ask, how far should we go? But after extensive research into the failure of the foster care system, I ask how far can we go?

Confronting the issues for children in foster care is uncomfortable—almost painful. But the foster care system is in crisis and children are suffering. We are compelled to confront these problems.

Foster care is a complicated entitlement program. Meaningful reform can only happen when Congress recognizes the seriousness of the problem and begins taking the measured steps toward reform.

While the issues are complex, so are the solutions.

Today we are getting what we pay for, long-term foster care. Twenty-one States are under consent decrees because they failed to take proper care of their children who had been abused or neglected by their parents.

Set up to serve as a temporary, emergency situation for children, the foster care system is now a lifestyle for many kids.

The Federal Government continues to pour billions of dollars into a system that lacks genuine accountability.

Instead of encouraging States to increase adoptions, the current system rewards long-term foster care arrangements.

Jennifer Toth described in her book "Orphans of the Living," children are "consigned to the substitute child care system, a chaotic, prison-like system intended to raise children whose parents and relatives cannot or will not care for them."

She also wrote, "the children in substitute child care today have all suffered trauma. They are all at greater risk than the general child population. Yet they are given less care, when they need more care. Many thousands of children are lost and millions of dollars are wasted each year because no one—not the caseworker, not the foster home—takes full responsibility for them. Instead, each is passed from one caseload and placement to another, with too many kids and too little attention to go around. When these chil-

dren look to adults for help, no one is there. Only when their situation becomes desperate, when they also fail, are they awarded the attention they crave."

One organization said that "foster care has been a black hole for many of America's neediest and most neglected children."

"I have a poster in my office that inspires me to work for real reform. The Iowa Citizen Foster Care Review Board asked children who were waiting to be adopted what they would like to tell us and this is what the children said: 'Don't leave us in foster care so long.' 'It is scary to move from home to home, find us one good family where we can feel like a real member of the family.' 'Check on us frequently while we're in foster care to ask us how we're doing and make sure we are safe.' 'Tell us what's going on so we don't have to guess. Tell us how long it will be before we're adopted and why things seem to take so long.'"

Dave Thomas of Wendy's challenged me and others to make sure kids have a happy childhood. For those who have had a happy childhood it is hard to understand why. For those who did not have a happy childhood—you know why, he said.

Children need to know that they have a permanency—which means successful, healthy reunification with their birth families or permanency in an adoptive home.

My wife, Barbara, and I, have been blessed as the parents of five children. Today, we get to watch our sons and daughters enjoy their own families and the happiness found through parenthood. These experiences have made me appreciate the importance of a family unit. A happy, permanent home life provides more than a safe haven for kids. It gives children confidence to grow into positive contributors in our society.

In the United States, at least a half million children are not living in permanent homes. While waiting for adoption or a safe return to their natural families, many kids may live out their childhoods in the foster care system. Sadly, it often turns into a lonely, even futile transition. If the "window of opportunity" is missed, a child can leave the system a legal orphan, as an adult.

These children leave foster care and enter onto the welfare rolls or into prison. Only 17 percent of those who emancipate from the system become completely self-supporting. Barely half finish high school, a little less than half are gainfully employed as adults. And, almost 60 percent of the girls give birth within a few years of leaving the system.

Since 1982, about 20,000 children a year are adopted from foster care. Obviously, that leaves tens of thousands of kids in limbo every year.

Reform is needed to help place more children in a safe, permanent home. Improvements should limit the time a child legally can spend in foster care;

remove financial incentives to keep kids in foster care; and, provide incentives for successful family reunifications or adoptions, not attempts.

More needs to be done to dispel the myth that some kids are unadoptable. I say that no child is unadoptable, we just haven't found a home for them yet. And, most children want the permanency provided through adoption.

I support the promotion of adoption, safety, and support for the Abused and Neglected Children Act, or Pass Act, because it takes the initial, necessary steps toward real reform.

For the first time, in 17 years, this body has strived to address the pain and suffering of these children. A cornerstone is laid upon which future reforms can be built.

The Pass Act will ensure health care coverage for adopted special needs children; break down geographic restrictions facing adoptive families; and, encourage creative adoptive efforts and outreach.

Thanks to Senator DEWINE's vision and efforts we have strengthened the reasonable efforts statute. Senator DEWINE raised our awareness on this issue and has been a champion for these children.

One of the problems we as legislators have experienced has been the inadequate statistics to understand the performance of the States. The data is sparse and many States can't tell us how many children they actually have in their care or how long they have been there. The Pass Act will require States to report critical statistics. No longer will children languish without being identified, their lives will be personalized to those responsible for them. We will know who they are, where they are, and how long they have been in the system. And, the status quo will not be able to hide behind the lack of information excuse.

Currently, the Federal Government does not require that States actively seek adoptive homes for all free-to-be-adopted children, who often are assigned to long-term foster care. This bill, however, will compel States to make reasonable efforts to place a child in an adoptive home. Long-term foster care should never be a solution for a child.

The Federal Government plays a significant role in child welfare, by providing funds to States and attaching conditions to these funds. The single largest category of Federal expenditure under the child welfare programs is for maintaining low-income children in foster care.

To receive Federal funds, States must comply with requirements designed so that children can remain safely with their families or return home after they have been placed in foster care. States will be penalized for not complying with the Pass Act.

In most States, children are being denied permanency because of the artificial barrier of geography. The Senate bill contains a provision that will

break down the geographic barriers to adoption.

An adoption organization in a northeastern State shared with me a real life example of why this provision is necessary.

Allison, Beth, Jimmy, and Jarod are siblings, ages 6, 8, 10, and 11. They were freed for adoption in October 1996.

Because the siblings had regular visits and a close relationship with each other, their caseworker hoped to find a family that could adopt all four children. Our agency was able to send the caseworker the home studies of four out-of-State families who were interested in, and had space to adopt, all four children. However, the State child welfare agency pressured the worker to select in-State families for the children.

Over a period of 6 months, there were no appropriate in-State families who could adopt all four children, so it was decided to split the sibling group. Jimmy and Jarod were placed with one family, and a different family has been identified for Allison and Beth.

It is the intent of this legislation to remove the geographic barriers that keep children from appropriate adoptive families.

I recognize the Members for their efforts on this issue and congratulate the authors of this monumental piece of legislation.

They understood the complexity of this issue and pushed for reform. It was a very unique coalition, and I was glad to be part of it.

Under Senator CRAIG's leadership, a successful consensus was formed and bipartisan, incremental steps were taken.

Senator ROTH was also instrumental in forging an agreement with Members so that this bill could pass with an overwhelming majority. His guidance and insight were critical to the bill's success.

Today we begin to change the culture surrounding adoption. Children deserve permanent homes. All children are valuable and adoptable.

I have been impressed by the compassion of those who adopt these special children. They are gifted and should inspire us all.

We know that more families are willing to adopt children, including those with the most challenging of circumstances.

We have always had a class of children considered unadoptable.

Several decades ago many said that minority children were unadoptable. We know now that is not true.

Many once thought that children with AIDS were unadoptable. We know now that is not true.

Adoption organizations are finding homes for children and have waiting lists of parents all over the country anxious to adopt children despite their special circumstances. One adoption agency has a waiting list of a hundred families, willing to adopt a child with Down's syndrome.

A family in Texas adopted 8 drug-exposed siblings ranging in age from 2 to 10.

Susan Badeau, a witness before the Senate Finance Committee, shared her story about adopting 19 children out of the foster care system—virtually rescuing them from a lifetime in foster care.

The Pass Act will encourage permanency for the children who cannot return to their original homes.

To ensure that these new adoptive families are healthy and stay together they will need postadoption services and respite care.

Postadoptive services are crucial for the success of these families because many of these children will have long-term service needs.

In States where postadoption services are offered, the number of adoptive families that disrupt is significantly lower.

According to the Congressional Research Service the following Federal programs could be used to provide postadoption services to adoptive families. Although none of these programs is exclusively intended to provide such services, they are among a number of allowable activities. They include the following: The Adoption Opportunities Program; the Family Preservation Program; Child Welfare Services; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; Community-Based Family Resource and Support; Child Care and Development Block Grant; and the Social Services Block Grant.

I was pleased with the provision in the Pass Act which emphasizes adoption promotion and support services in the Family Preservation and Support Service Act.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD an explanation of the services provided under these programs.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

1. The Adoption Opportunities Program authorizes appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a number of adoption-related activities, including provision of post-legal adoption services for families that have adopted special needs children. These services may be provided either directly or by grant or contract with States, local governments, public or private nonprofit licensed child welfare or adoption agencies, or adoptive family groups. Services must supplement, and not supplant, activities funded through other sources with the same general purpose, including individual, group or family counseling, case management, training, assistance to adoptive parent organizations, and assistance to support groups for adoptive parents, adopted children or siblings of adopted children.

2. Family Preservation Program. The Social Security Act authorizes entitlement grants to States, which are used for two types of services: family preservation, and community-based family support. "Family preservation" services are intended for children and families (including adoptive families) that are at risk or in crisis, and may include respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents or other care givers,

and services designed to improve parenting skills in such areas as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health and nutrition.

3. Child Welfare Services. Under subpart 1 of title IV-B, the Social Security Act also authorizes appropriations for grants to states for child welfare services, which are defined broadly to include public social services directed toward protection and promotion of the welfare of children. These funds are typically used to support State children protective service and child welfare systems. However, while post-adoption services are not specifically identified in the statute, they could be allowable activities at State option.

4. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Title I of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) authorizes funds for HHS to conduct a variety of discretionary activities, including grants to mutual support and self-help groups for strengthening families, respite and crisis nursery programs provided by community-based organizations, and hospital-based information and referral services for parents of children with disabilities and children who have been victims of abuse or neglect.

5. Community-Based Family Resource and Support. Title II of CAPTA authorizes HHS to make grants to States to develop, operate, and expand statewide networks of community-based family resource and support programs. These programs provide various forms of support for families, including respite care for adoptive families.

6. Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This program authorizes both discretionary and mandatory funding for States to help subsidize the cost of child care for low-income families, including both working families and families receiving welfare. Adoptive families in need of child care could potentially receive assistance under this program, assuming they met income and other eligibility criteria.

7. Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). Title XX of the Social Security Act authorizes entitlement grants to States that may be used for a wide variety of social services at the states' discretion. Although services for adoptive families are not specified in the law, States could opt to use SSBG funds for this purpose.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, let's build upon the cornerstone of this monumental bill. Congress has a chance to continue to press on for meaningful reform. In spite of this legislation, some children will still remain hostages in an inefficient system.

Any future reforms must: First, strive to dramatically limit the time a child can legally spend in foster care. According to the available statistics, the national average length of stay in foster care is three years—three birthdays, three christmases, first, second and third grade. Second, remove financial incentives to keep children in foster care; and provide incentives for success not for attempts. Currently the system pays the same rate per child per month without limitation. The Federal Government is entitled to pay for performance.

Senator BROWBACK plans to hold hearings next year as chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of the District of Columbia to determine what the Federal Government can do to address the crumbling foster care system in the District.

These children are the most vulnerable of all—their little lives begin with abuse and neglect by their own parents and, for many, they experience systemic abuse by languishing in long term foster care.

CRS stated that "children are vulnerable and their well-being is affected by conditions beyond their control." But is not beyond our control.

Those on the front lines, on whom we rely to make this policy work include: the court appointed special advocates, volunteers who advocate in the courts on the children's behalf; juvenile judges—an Illinois judge told me she requires each of the children's pictures to be attached to the front of their files so that those who come in contact with the case know that these are children, not a caseload number; the foster and adoptive parent associations; the citizen foster care review boards; special needs adoption organizations, Governors, the human services departments and social workers.

We are all responsible for these children who depend on us. Foster care is a poor parent. A loving, committed family is the best gift to give any child. Passage of this bill is one way to encourage this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senator from Alabama will be recognized for however much time he may consume.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. President.

First, I would like to say how much I appreciate the excellent comments of the Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY. He believes deeply in improving the life and health of children, as you do, Mr. President, and have worked toward that end.

I salute the work that has been done. It is a major step forward in improving foster care and the ability to adopt children in America, which is something this Congress, I think, will be able to take real pride in.

CLAY COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK DEDICATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise this evening to speak about a dedication ceremony that will take place tomorrow afternoon in the city of Lineville in Clay County, AL. Mr. President, I would first like to take this opportunity to express my deep regret for not having been able to be in Lineville this afternoon with those who have gathered for the dedication of the Clay County Veterans Memorial Park. I would be remiss if I did not also take this opportunity to offer my sincerest thanks to Alabama State Senator Gerald Dial and the other members of the Veterans Memorial Board for working hard to make the Clay County Veterans Memorial Park a reality and for extending an invitation to me to participate in their dedication ceremony.

Mr. President, I make these remarks tonight for one reason. Simply, It is

about honor. Certainly, not personal honor. That is one variety we are all familiar with. No, the type of honor to which I am referring is the uncommon variety. It is the variety that we bestow as a tribute on special occasions for veterans and other heroes in our society who made the supreme sacrifice.

In less than 24 hours, my constituents will gather to honor all the men and women who, over the years, left their homes and loved ones, their jobs, friends and neighbors all over Clay County to answer a special calling. The veterans they honor might have grown up in Delta, in Ashland, in Cragford, in Hollins, in Millerville, in Barfield, in Lineville or anywhere in between, but even though they may have been separated by the miles and the years between them, a common thread ran through each of their lives. They were all connected by their love for this land and this country.

We should take a moment to reflect on that for a minute—connected by a distinguishable act of love of country and a willingness to serve that country where ever it directed. Hence, Mr. President, I stand here tonight to join them in paying homage, to show our respect, and our sincerest appreciation for the sacrifices that these patriots made for our country. Sacrifices that ensured the freedom you and I enjoy today and our children's children will enjoy years from now. With the dedication of this memorial park they are simply saying thank you to all those who have gone before, those who believed enough in freedom to risk their lives.

In commemorating the memory of these friends and loved ones, we are reflecting on a glorious past, but we are also pausing, I think, for a moment to look forward in time with a hopeful spirit and a pledge of unwavering support to the young men and women in communities all around this great Nation that we will unconditionally support them just as we supported those we honor today.

The Clay County Veterans Memorial Park will be as much an emblem of the courageous spirit and bravery of patriots from yesteryear, as it will be a beacon of hope and source of strength for future generations. I pledge to do my part to make sure that we remain the strongest and greatest country in the world, and we defend our just national interest.

Mr. President, ours is both an important and a unique moment in history. We no longer live in the bipolar world that shaped our lives and our political consciousness over the last half century. The monolithic presence of the Soviet Union has been replaced by new threats. We live in a rapidly changing world where our ability to adapt and our commitment to remain a world leader will be tested by both the cunning and the strong. The veterans being honored today defeated Nazi Fascism, brought Soviet Communism to its knees, were victorious against tyranny, and protected democracy and