

join literally thousands from all across our State who join me in saying thank you.●

#### CITY OF HACKENSACK

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to inform the Senate that Americans are still committed to economic progress and that local government is not powerless in the face of economic challenges. In my home State of New Jersey, the city of Hackensack has shown that dedication to solving long-term economic problems can be accomplished with practical leadership utilizing innovative solutions.

Over the past few years, the city of Hackensack had seen its downtown population decrease and its economic stability put at risk. The people of Hackensack were not to be deterred from making their city the best it could be. So, instead of accepting an unsatisfying economic fate, Hackensack's mayor and city council called together local business leaders to establish the Hackensack Economic Development Commission. This pioneering commission set out to study the city's economic climate and propose steps toward its continuing development.

This study, conducted by the Eagleton Institute's Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University, is the first of its kind by a municipality in our State. The city's initiative and creativity in utilizing these research tools should be commended. Hackensack's climate study is unique in that it reached a broad range of people, over 5,000 residents and workers of the Hackensack area. The wide scope and depth of the study is a model for similarly situated cities in New Jersey.

Yet, more than a model for New Jersey, the efforts of the commission serve as a model for the entire country to prove that with solid community commitment, ongoing economic growth can be a reality. Thus, I ask that you join me in recognizing the city of Hackensack in its devotion to be an improved economic development and commend its foresight and planning to other cities across the Nation.●

#### NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY— MARCH 20, 1997

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to America's farm families and those involved, both directly and indirectly, in production agriculture.

Today, is National Agriculture Day. It is an opportunity for all of America to pause, reflect, and be thankful that we enjoy the safest and most abundant food supply in the world. But, this doesn't happen by accident.

Every day, 77,000 farm families in Illinois go about the business of producing the food and fiber that our State and our Nation needs to survive. To them I say, thank you.

Mr. President, I am honored to represent the State of Illinois. It is the home of some of the most productive farm land in the world. Illinois farms produce corn, soybeans, pork, beef, wheat, dairy products, and many specialty crops. Our agribusiness community is vibrant. And, our researchers help provide answers to some of the most common as well as the most complex agricultural questions we know.

Over the last few months, I've traveled my home State and talked to farmers and others involved in production agriculture. The message from my fellow Illinoisans has been clear—health insurance affordability and economic opportunity are priority issues.

I believe that a 100-percent tax deduction for health insurance premiums is one of the most basic issues to farm families across this country. Because of the high cost of health insurance, especially individually purchased insurance, lack of affordability is a growing problem. Health insurance is particularly important to those involved in production agriculture because farming is one of the more dangerous occupations. Therefore, it is essential that farmers have access to quality health care and that they be covered by health insurance.

To help with affordability of health insurance, I plan to introduce legislation that would allow farmers and other self-employed individuals to pay for their health insurance premiums with pretax dollars. When it comes to health insurance, farmers and small business owners deserve to be treated the same as corporations. Corporations are allowed to take an income tax deduction for the full cost of the health insurance premiums that they pay.

The self-employed, including farmers, can only deduct 40 percent of their premiums this year. My bill would allow farmers to deduct 100 percent of their health insurance premiums from their taxable income this year and every year thereafter. A 100-percent deduction for health insurance premiums can reduce the net cost of health insurance for a farm family by as much as \$500 to \$1,000 annually. This savings can make the difference between whether health insurance is affordable or price-prohibitive. The affordability of quality health insurance is vitally important to Illinois' and America's farm families.

Mr. President, another important issue for rural America is finding new or alternative uses for our agricultural products to help ensure economic opportunity for farm families. Ethanol, a renewable fuel made from corn, is one of the best alternative use opportunities that exists today.

Last week the Government Accounting Office released a report, *Alcohol Fuels: Tax Incentives Have Had Little Effect on Air Quality or Energy Security.* Unfortunately, this report misses the point. That point is simple: Ethanol has a significant economic, environmental, and energy security im-

pact in this country; one that past GAO reports have clearly recognized. The effect on air quality and energy security would be larger if more of our Nation's gasoline contained ethanol.

Ethanol should not be a poster child for Government handouts or corporate welfare. The primary incentive—a 5.4-cents-per-gallon reduction in the gasoline excise tax for 10 percent ethanol blends—is not claimed by major ethanol-producing corporations. The incentive is claimed by thousands of gasoline marketers—mostly independent, small businesses—that sell ethanol blends all across the country. In other words, the incentive is claimed at corner gas stations, not in corporate boardrooms.

On a day like today, it is important to point out the benefits of ethanol. The industry is responsible, both directly and indirectly, for more than 40,000 American jobs. Ethanol contributes more than \$5.6 billion annually to our economy. Five percent of our Nation's corn crop goes to ethanol production. Corn growers have seen their incomes increased by more than \$1.2 billion because of ethanol. This year over 1.4 billion gallons of ethanol will be produced. Thanks to the reformulated gasoline program, toxic air pollutants like benzene and carbon monoxide have fallen substantially. And, ethanol contributes over \$2 billion annually to the U.S. trade balance.

Finally, Mr. President, in order for our country to continue to have a safe and abundant food supply we must support agricultural research. This year, we have an opportunity to reauthorize the research title of the farm bill. Congressional reauthorization will establish national policy for important agricultural research into the 21st century. In these times of constrained Federal budgets, it is vitally important to maintain an effective system for agricultural research.

Agriculture-related research in this country is currently conducted at over 100 ARS labs, including Peoria, IL, and over 70 land grant institutions, including the University of Illinois. Unfortunately, the United States ranks behind Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany in the percentage of total research and development funding that is dedicated to agriculture. From soybean diseases to water quality to biotechnology, agricultural research plays an important part in the safety and quality of our food and fiber system.

Mr. President, last year Congress passed a comprehensive reauthorization of most farm programs. This year we need to continue that commitment by ensuring affordable health care and deductibility of premiums for farmers and the self-employed, promoting the use of alternative agricultural products like ethanol, and modernizing our agriculture system by continuing a strong and active investment in research.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle

and from rural and urban areas to ensure that American agriculture remains a model of quality and efficiency for all nations.●

#### NOMINATION OF MERRICK GARLAND

● Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, yesterday I voted "no" on the nomination of Merrick Garland to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

In so voting, I take no position on the personal qualifications of Mr. Garland to be a Federal appeals court judge. What I do take a position on is that the vacant 12th seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit does not need to be filled. Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts, has examined this issue thoroughly, and has determined that the court's workload does not justify the existence of the 12th seat. Last Congress, Senator GRASSLEY introduced legislation to abolish this unneeded seat. By proceeding to renominate Mr. Garland, President Clinton has flatly ignored this uncontradicted factual record.

I commend Senator GRASSLEY for his important work on this matter, as well as Senator JEFF SESSIONS, who has also emphasized the importance of this matter. With the Federal deficit at an all time high, we should always be vigilant in looking for all opportunities to cut wasteful government spending; this is one such opportunity. After all, each unnecessary circuit judge and his or her staff cost the taxpayer at least \$1 million a year.

Lastly, our vote yesterday is an important precedent, since it marks the beginning of the Senate's new commitment to hold rollcall votes on all judicial nominees. This is a policy change which I had urged on my Republican colleagues by letter of January 8, 1997, to the Republican Conference. Voting on Federal judges, who serve for life and who exert dramatic—mostly unchecked—influence over society, should be one of the most important aspects of serving as a U.S. Senator. Rollcall votes will, I believe, impress upon the individual judge, the individual Senator, and the public the importance of just what we are voting on. I hope that my colleagues will regard this vote, and every vote they take on a Federal judge, as being among the most important votes they will ever take.●

#### TRIBUTE TO PROF. ROBERT J. LAMPMAN

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise to offer tribute to Dr. Robert J. Lampman, economist, University of Wisconsin-Madison professor and noted researcher on poverty, who passed away March 4 at his home in Madison.

Mr. President, Dr. Lampman spent much of his distinguished professional

career studying and writing about poverty and working to develop strategies to achieve its end. In 1966, he became the founding director of the Institute for Research on Poverty, a nonpartisan center for research into the causes and consequences of poverty and social inequality in America, on the UW-Madison campus, which established the university as a leader of research in that field. A colleague at the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Lee Hansen, called Dr. Lampman "a true scholar in that he was always asking questions to get a better understanding of the issues."

Despite his standing in his profession, Dr. Lampman was known as a professor who regarded his students as colleagues. One news report describing his career included a recollection by Dr. Thomas Corbett, once a graduate student studying with Dr. Lampman and now a University of Wisconsin professor of social work and acting director of the IRP. Dr. Corbett recalled Dr. Lampman's stopping by his office and saying he wanted "to pick my brain." "In a world where egos can become overwhelming, he was a guy who never lost his perspective," Dr. Corbett said.

In 1962, he joined the staff of President John Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisors, where he prophetically warned that economic growth, alone, would not eliminate poverty. He was later a key author of the historic chapter on poverty contained in Lyndon Johnson's "Economic Report of the President" in 1964 that helped call America's attention to poverty.

Dr. Lampman became, in the words of Nobel laureate economist James Tobin, "the intellectual architect of the War on Poverty," and he emphasized the importance of economic growth, income maintenance, and opportunities for education and jobs for those mired in poverty.

In 1964, as the War on Poverty was getting underway, he predicted to a group of University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate students that, within 20 years, "by present standards, no one will be poor."

Mr. President, it turned out that Professor Lampman was overly optimistic. Poverty was not eliminated in 20 years, but the War on Poverty had an impact. In 1964, before the War on Poverty was up and running, 19 percent of Americans were poor. Within 5 years, programs created by the Federal Government and a broadly expanding economy had combined to bring that number down to 12.1 percent. By 1973, the poverty rate was down to 11.1 percent.

That progress stalled, for many reasons. Census Bureau estimates for 1995, the most recent year for which data are available, tell us 13.8 percent of our Nation's population was poor, and, in the wealthiest nation in history, one American child in five lived in poverty.

Mr. President, Dr. Lampman's dedication, his intellectual energy, and his commitment to solving one of the most difficult, complex, and persistent social challenges we face should inform and

inspire us. We should apply, as Dr. Lampman did, our best efforts to ridding our world of the plague of poverty and finally establishing social justice. That would be the most fitting tribute we could pay to this man.●

#### RURAL HEALTH

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to pledge my support to the Rural Health Improvement Act of 1997. In my home State of Michigan and across the Nation, this legislation would improve the standard of health care for millions of Americans who live in rural areas.

Mr. President, I am very aware of the problems inherent in caring for citizens who live far away from major cities. Too often, these hardworking taxpayers and their children are not given easy access to the quality emergency and primary care services they deserve. There have, however, been two recent efforts that have been extremely successful in providing such care while also controlling costs — the Montana Medical Assistance Facility demonstration project and the Essential Access Community Hospital and Rural Primary Care Hospital demonstration program.

Mr. President, the bill that I endorse today would extend these successful initiatives to all 50 States. It would also ease Federal regulations for small hospitals that wish to be designated as "critical access" institutions. The aim of the bill is to allow these facilities greater flexibility in tailoring their services to the needs of patients in their particular communities. In short, I believe this law would improve care and save lives. A study of these programs by the General Accounting Office, in fact, has found that these initiatives actually decreased Medicare costs while maintaining a high standard of care.

In my view, Michigan and the rest of the Nation must receive the most affordable high quality care available. I believe this legislation is an important step in that direction. For these reasons, I am proud to cosponsor this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.●

#### SAFE ADOPTIONS AND FAMILIES ENVIRONMENTS ACT

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong support for the Chafee-Rockefeller Safe Adoptions and Families Environments Act [SAFE]. What's more, I commend each of them for their tireless and bipartisan efforts on behalf of this issue.

As I come to the floor today, it is difficult for me to imagine a more outrageous and disgraceful form of violence than child abuse.

However, while national attention to the problems of abuse are increasing, regrettably, so too are incidents of child abuse and neglect.

In fact, the number of abused and neglected children nearly doubled from