

who I recently met with. On the economic front, Georgia's new currency, the lari, has remained stable since its introduction in 1995. The International Monetary Fund and the U.S. Department of State have praised Georgia's economic initiatives and their significant progress in developing a free-market economy. Several U.S. corporations have already established a presence in Georgia, spurring jobs and economic growth in both nations.

Mr. President, I encourage everyone to note this historic day, and congratulate Georgia on its extraordinary progress toward democracy and free-market principles.●

RAISING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND LOWERING COLLEGE COSTS AT WEST MESA HIGH SCHOOL, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

● Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the achievements of the students and educators at West Mesa High School in Albuquerque, NM, and especially its growing Advanced Placement [AP] program.

On Tuesday, April 1, I had the opportunity to visit West Mesa and speak with students and teachers participating in the school's AP program. Several State legislators and business leaders joined me in a short but invaluable group discussion and class visit.

Perhaps most impressive was the visit to one of Mr. Tomas Fernandez' AP English classes, where students explained in their own words why AP courses are so important. In this class, the students don't ask for less home work or "dumbed-down" classes; they are demanding more challenging classes and higher academic expectations for all students. While AP classes are new to many, and set a very high standard, the students had found that they could succeed.

Principal Milton Baca and a growing number of West Mesa teachers are responding to this demand by providing more and more challenging classes in the school's growing AP program. For example, West Mesa recently added an AP Calculus course in addition to its AP English course, and five teachers attended AP teacher training institutes last summer. More teachers are planning to attend AP training courses this summer so they can start an AP science course in the next school year. I applaud all of these efforts.

For college-bound students, taking AP courses and passing AP exams can translate into valuable college credits for advanced high school work. For those AP students who decide not to go to college, they and their prospective employers can be confident that they are better prepared academically and will have an advantage as they compete for jobs and enter the work force.

Because AP programs are so beneficial to both work- and college-bound students, I have been working on efforts to expand these programs, as part of the solution to our State's clear

need for immediate, measurable education reform. To show the importance of strong academic skills to employers, I am working with several businesses in New Mexico to develop employment incentives for students who take and pass AP exams, especially in the core academic areas of English, math, and science. In addition, I am gratified that the State legislature increased funding for the AP New Mexico program to \$200,000 next year, as I requested in testimony before the relevant committees.

Despite this important progress, West Mesa High School and New Mexico have a long way to go to more fully utilize the AP program as a way to challenge high school students, raise academic achievement to higher levels, and improve our long-term economic productivity. In New Mexico, roughly 5,000 students took AP classes in 1996—up 22 percent from 2 years ago—with a 20-percent increase in AP tests taken, but this is still below the national average. New Mexico's per-capita participation rate remains 20 percent lower than Arizona's and 40 percent below the national average.

We are facing an uphill struggle to improve our schools and students' academic performance in several areas, including making better use of the AP program. But the strides that West Mesa High School is making are compelling evidence that we can make real and lasting positive change in our schools. I congratulate West Mesa's students and teachers on their accomplishments so far, wish them well on further advancement, and offer my assistance as they continue to improve.●

UNIVERSAL SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I have read the report in the Wall Street Journal that Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed E. Hundt proposes to implement only a portion of the new universal service fund rules by the statutory deadline of May 8. Specifically, he suggests delaying the adoption of rules assuring reasonable rates for telephone subscribers in rural and high-cost areas, although he would proceed to implement a new \$3 billion yearly fund to wire schools, libraries, and health care facilities through an unspecified tax on telephone company revenues.

Last January I wrote to Chairman Hundt about his apparent desire to implement these provisions prior to implementing the remainder of the universal service provisions of the statute. At that time, I stated that sound implementation of the Telecommunications Act requires that the Commission resolve all the related issues involved in universal service carefully and contemporaneously.

Apparently Chairman Hundt has not changed his view, Mr. President, but neither have I.

Implementing universal service funding in separate stages would be incom-

patible with the law. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 states clearly and unambiguously that the FCC "shall initiate a single proceeding to implement the recommendations from the Joint Board . . . and shall complete such proceeding" by May 8, 1997.

It would be consistent with this unequivocal statutory requirement for the FCC to adopt specific new rules on May 8 and have them take effect in the future. It would also be consistent with the statute for the FCC to adopt general outlines of new rules on May 8, and fill in specific details by subsequent order. The FCC can, and in my judgment should, avail itself of these courses of action if it finds, for whatever reason, that it cannot adopt final rules on all aspects of universal service on May 8. But one thing the FCC cannot do by law is pick and choose some statutory requirements to put into effect on May 8, and delay the rest till later.

Let me be clear. I can understand the possible problem Chairman Hundt faces: too much proposed subsidy, and not enough revenue to handle it without raising rates for telephone service. I emphatically am not suggesting that he simply proceed to adopt final universal service fund rules and thereby raise telephone rates on May 8. But if, after studying universal service as extensively as it has, the FCC has concluded that it cannot implement the universal service provisions of the statute without increasing telephone rates or incurring similar unacceptable outcomes, it must defer from implementing any universal service rules until it can satisfactorily demonstrate to both the Congress and the public that any rate increases that would result are inevitable in fact and appropriate in amount.

Unless and until the FCC can do that, the Commission should take no final action on universal service. To try and evade the issue by implementing the parts of universal service that may be politically desirable while dodging the rest because it appears politically unpalatable would be a dereliction of the Commission's duty under law.●

HONORING LARA GREEN SPECTOR

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to honor Lara Green Spector, the Tobacco-Free Kids East Regional Youth Advocate of the Year. Lara is a ninth grader from Montclair High School in New Jersey who truly exemplifies the old adage that one person can make a difference.

Lara was the motivating force behind Montclair's recently passed ordinance banning cigarette vending machines and self-service displays. Who knows how many Montclair teenagers and children may not take up smoking because cigarettes are now more difficult to obtain. And local public officials, school advisers and residents all agree that this ordinance would never have

become a reality without Lara's initiative, leadership and tenacity.

Lara also organized a townwide program for the Great American Smokeout in November 1996. Her program included a poster contest in the local elementary schools and a quiz contest in the middle schools. She also created and distributed a fact sheet to every Montclair student. For years, tobacco companies have used youth oriented advertisements, like Joe Camel, to send a false message to young people that smoking is cool and glamorous. Education campaigns like Lara's help blow away their smoke screens and demonstrate that cigarettes are addictive and deadly.

Mr. President, for years, I have led the crusade in this Chamber against teenage and youth smoking. I am certainly happy to have an exceptional foot soldier like Lara join me in the fight.

By working to stop children and young people from smoking, Lara Green Spector is enhancing lives and saving lives. She is an outstanding student, activist, and citizen, and I have a feeling that we have not heard the last from her on Capitol Hill.●

COMMEMORATING THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF JACKIE ROBINSON'S DEBUT IN PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, 50 years ago a true American hero walked onto Ebbets Field one afternoon and forever shattered the color barrier with one swing of his bat. His name was Jack Roosevelt Robinson.

On that day, 7 years before Brown versus the Board of Education allowed school children of all colors to sit in the same classroom, 16 years before Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of his dreams at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, and 18 years before the Civil Rights Act became the law of the land, Jackie Robinson did more for the equal rights movement and the sport of baseball than had anyone before him.

Jackie Robinson on April 15, 1947, became the first professional black athlete to play America's pastime, baseball. In his Brooklyn Dodgers uniform, he not only broke the color barrier, but he also broke numerous baseball records during his 10-year professional career.

By the end of his tenure as a player, Jackie Robinson would become one of America's most celebrated and honored athletes. He became major league baseball's first Rookie of the Year—an award now named after him, the national league's Most Valuable Player, holder of the coveted batting title, a six-time member of Dodgers' World Series teams, a member of the 1955 world champion Dodgers, and a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

As the senior U.S. Senator representing California, I am particularly proud of the fact that Jackie Robinson was from the Golden State, raised in Pasadena, and was a star athlete at the Uni-

versity of California at Los Angeles. At UCLA, Robinson became the first athlete ever to win varsity letters in four sports: baseball, basketball, football, and track.

Such an amazing and talented athlete, however, was not welcomed into the arms of American baseball fans or of its players back in the spring of 1947.

Jackie Robinson fought prejudice and harassment with every base he ran, every ball he hit, and every victory he helped win for his team. Players and coaches yelled racial slurs at him, and one team even threatened to strike in protest of Robinson's presence in their city. But Robinson, remembering how his mother refused to sell their family home and move away amid protests from white neighbors, persevered.

He faced hatred and racism with courage and conviction, proving to teammates, opponents and fans alike that he had earned the right to play professional baseball through his sheer athleticism. Along the way, Robinson became the role model for future baseball icons such as Hank Aaron and Willie Mayes.

Shortly after his retirement from baseball in 1957, Jackie Robinson helped to further the rights of all African-Americans by becoming a spokesman and fundraiser for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people [NAACP]. He traveled the country urging black communities to work together for equal rights, educating and encouraging them to participate in the new civil rights movement. He became a role model all over again, this time to millions of men and women who saw inequality and wanted to change it.

Jackie Robinson represents everything good with baseball, and everything great with America. By commemorating his achievements and his entrance onto the professional baseball fields, his legacy lives on, inspiring yet another generation of fans to realize their dreams and break new ground along the way.

Jackie Robinson once said, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." By that standard, Jackie Robinson's life was as important as America's greatest heroes throughout history, and we as a nation are all grateful and proud of his accomplishments.

Major league baseball has recognized Jackie Robinson's achievements by dedicating the 1997 season to his memory. As part of these festivities, last week's opening day games were played in all major league stadiums with a Jackie Robinson commemorative baseball. Just last weekend, the Los Angeles Dodgers paid tribute to the Hall of Famer in a pregame ceremony attended by Rachel Robinson, Jackie's widow.

The Dodgers plan many other activities throughout the year such as a Jackie Robinson poster distributed to all Los Angeles district schools, a special section devoted to Robinson on the Dodgers' official web site, a salute to Jackie Robinson scholarship winners, an historic Robinson display at Dodger Stadium and assistance with the Jack-

ie Robinson Foundation Golf Classic. Additionally, President Clinton will honor his memory with Rachel Robinson in an April 15 ceremony at Shea Stadium during a game between the Dodgers and the New York Mets.

I salute the memory of Jackie Robinson on this, the 50th anniversary of his becoming the first black baseball player in the major leagues.●

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 543

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I understand that S. 543, introduced today by Senator COVERDELL, is at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 543) to provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.

Mr. LOTT. I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request on behalf of Senators on the Democratic side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1997

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until the hour of 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 10.

I further ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, immediately following the prayer, the routine requests through the morning hour be granted and the Senate immediately resume consideration of the Thurmond amendment to S. 104, the Nuclear Policy Act.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, for the information of all Senators, tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. the Senate will resume consideration of the Thurmond amendment to the Nuclear Policy Act. Thus far, we have made, I think, some progress on this important legislation. It is my hope that the Senate will be able to make additional progress during tomorrow's session and that we will be able to bring it to conclusion. But I do want to advise Senators that we do expect the likelihood of votes on amendments tomorrow and possibly even final passage, although that is still being discussed.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:03 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 10, 1997, at 9:30 a.m.