

intent to enter into the contract and certify to those committees that such contract is in the national interest. The contract may then be entered into only after the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date of such notification and certification.

STEVENS (AND INOUE)
AMENDMENT NO. 846.

Mr. STEVENS (for himself and Mr. INOUE) proposed an amendment to the bill, S. 1005, *supra*; as follows:

At an appropriate place in the bill insert:
SEC. . FINDINGS.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, at the Madrid summit, decided to admit three new members, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary;

The President, on behalf of the United States endorsed an advocated the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to include three additional members;

The Senate will consider the ratification of instruments to approve the admissions of new members to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

The United States has contributed more than \$20,000,000,000 since 1952 for infrastructure and support of the Alliance;

In appropriations Acts likely to be considered by the Senate for fiscal year 1998, \$449,000,000 has been requested by the President for expenditures in direct support of United States Participation in the Alliance; and

In appropriations Acts likely to be considered by the Senate for Fiscal year 1998, \$9,983,300,000 has been requested by the President in support of United States military expenditures in North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries.

SEC. .

The Secretary of Defense shall identify and report to the congressional defense committees not later than October 1, 1997: (1) the amounts necessary, by appropriation account, for all anticipated costs to the U.S., for the admission of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the fiscal years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, and; (2) any new commitments or obligations entered into or assumed by the United States in association with the admission of new members to the Alliance, to include the deployment of United States military personnel, the provision of defense articles or equipment, training activities and the modification and construction of military facilities.

ROBB AMENDMENT NO. 847

(Ordered to lie on the table.)

Mr. ROBB submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill, S. 1005, *supra*; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 8099. Of the total amount appropriated under title IV for the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy shall make \$36,000,000 available for a program to demonstrate expanded use of multitechnology automated reader cards throughout the Navy and the Marine Corps, including demonstration of the use of the so-called "smartship" technology of the ship-to-shore work load/off load program.

HARKIN AMENDMENT NO. 848

Mr. HARKIN proposed an amendment to the bill, S. 1005, *supra*; as follows:

At the end of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. . None of the funds available to the Department of Defense under this Act may

be obligated or expended to pay a contractor under a contract with the Department of Defense for any costs incurred by the contractor when it is made known to the Federal official having authority to obligate or expend such funds that such costs are restructuring costs associated with a business combination that were incurred on or after July 15, 1997.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to announce that a full committee hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will take place Wednesday, July 23, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of this hearing is to broadly examine three aspects of natural gas issues into the next century. Specifically, the committee will want to look at world energy supply and demand to 2015, what percentage of that will be filled by natural gas and how this could be impacted by other large scale energy projects, such as nuclear, that are being developed in Asia. Second would be to explore the role of Government in large scale gas projects in foreign countries, what type of assistance the U.S. companies competing for overseas projects receive from the U.S. Government and what can be done in the United States to make American gas more competitive worldwide. Third would be to examine the emerging technologies in gas field development that are making natural gas more economical to market.

Those who wish to testify or to submit written testimony should write to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Presentation of oral testimony is by committee invitation only. For further information, please contact Jo Meuse or Brian Malnak at (202) 224-6730.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

EXPLANATION OF SELECTED
VOTES ON SPENDING PORTION
OF THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT
OF 1997

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, recently, the Senate considered historic changes to preserve Medicare for future generations. I think it is important to outline my views in detail on a few of the key votes cast regarding these issues.

I believe, as legislators, a chief concern must be protecting Medicare solvency for the long term. The Medicare Program is in a crisis situation. As reported in the most recent Medicare trustees report, the hospital insurance trust fund will be bankrupt by the year 2001. Hence, immediate action must be taken to save this vital program.

The change contained in the bill would bring Medicare's eligibility age

in line with the Social Security's eligibility age and would do it over a long period of time. Importantly, the increased eligibility age does not begin to phase in until 2003 and then increases slowly over 24 years. In essence, this position will not be fully in place for 30 years. This means that the full 2-year increase would only apply to individuals currently 36 years old and younger.

This was, for me, a close question. However, as noted, this provision will not begin to be phased in for 6 years. For that reason—to launch a process that can lead to a positive, permanent solution—I voted in support, but with significant hesitations. If, in the next several years, my concerns can be alleviated, I will continue to support the proposal. If not, I will withdraw my support well in advance of 2003. Especially relevant will be the findings of the Medicare Reform Commission, created by this legislation, on how best to maintain the long-term solvency of this program. Specifically, will the Commission support an increase in the Medicare eligibility age? If the report rejects this idea I would withdraw my support. In addition, well before any change in age, we need to fully address how the health care needs of low-income seniors between the ages of 65 to 67, will be met once this provision is implemented. Failure to do so would also be grounds for rejecting the proposal. And finally, we must develop ways by which middle-income seniors will be able to purchase and maintain their insurance under such a provision. This may be through medical savings accounts or other means, but we must ensure that viable alternatives are available to all seniors. If, in the next 2 to 3 years, these concerns are not addressed, or the Medicare Commission disagrees with our actions, I will withdraw my support for increasing the eligibility age.

Another long-term reform proposal debated concerns the bill's plan to means test Medicare part B premiums. Currently, seniors pay 25 percent of their part B premium while the Federal Government pays 75 percent of their premium. The bill would require seniors with incomes starting at \$50,000—for a single senior—to pay a larger percent of this premium, with seniors making \$100,000 a year required to pay the entire portion of their premium—up to \$2,160 a year. Senator KENNEDY offered an amendment to strike the means testing of premiums that was included in the Medicare bill. I supported the effort to strike this provision.

Unlike the eligibility age issue, the means testing proposal would have immediate effect. I was concerned that before such a fundamental change took place, the issue should be reviewed and the consequences closely examined. We have not had hearings on this issue and I believe that hearings and closer review are necessary before a change of this magnitude is made to the Medicare Program. Further, I do not believe

we should consider a proposal such as means testing until we have other viable alternatives in place such as medical savings accounts, to give middle-income seniors a way to better afford their Medicare and health services. In my judgment, to immediately implement the proposal in the bill would unfairly pull the rug out from under middle-income seniors without adequate notice or the provision of a legitimate option. This isn't fair.

To me, a \$50,000 income isn't wealthy. Moreover, many seniors who would have their premiums dramatically increased have carefully prepared and planned their retirements. Their incomes may already be committed to maintaining the mortgage and upkeep of a home, support of relatives, or saving for special nursing home care and so on. To change the rules this substantially and in the middle of the game, with no time for adjustment is wrong.●

HARRISVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, A 1997 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Harrisville Elementary School of Harrisville, WV. This fine public school was recently selected as a 1997 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. It was 1 of 7 elementary schools in my State to receive this prestigious award, and 1 of 38 West Virginia schools that have been recognized since the National Blue Ribbon School Program began in 1982.

Schools are judged on curriculum, leadership, teaching environment, student performance on standardized tests, parent and community support, graduation rates and post graduation pursuits. Harrisville Elementary's goal is "to educate all students to their maximum abilities." Although 65 percent of the students are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, a high level of achievement is expected of all students. Along with Principal Marion Roby; teachers, support staff, parents, and community members work together to provide students with quality learning experiences. This dedication to student success and academic excellence is evident in the remarkable growth the students have achieved. Student total battery scores on the CTBS/4 test have increased from the 47th percentile to the 88th percentile.

Located in the north-central part of the State, Harrisville Elementary School was the first school in Ritchie County to have a networked computer lab where all students have daily scheduled class. The students also participate in STARS (Special Time with At-Risk Students) and take part in GATORS (Guiding Attitudes Toward Outstanding Responsible Students). These two staff designed programs promote life-long decisionmaking skills and build self esteem. The school piloted a comprehensive health program,

Know Your Body, which was later adopted by the rest of the country. The school's staff is one of the best in the State with four Ritchie County Teachers of the Year, including the 1996 honoree.

As a National Blue Ribbon School, Harrisville Elementary School is a role model for other schools across the country on how teachers, administrators, parents and students can work together to create an educational environment that helps children excel. Everyone in the Harrisville community should be proud of the notoriety that their local institution has achieved. It is my pleasure to publicly congratulate this school for its commitment to academic success. I know that this school will continue its good work and represent West Virginia proudly on a national level.●

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY SUMMER AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, it is with considerable pride I share with you today an educational program that is bringing hope and insight to students in Oregon. It is characterized by voluntarism, authentic educational programs, and community involvement. The program itself, and its individual parts, serves as a model for educational reforms throughout our Nation.

The Oregon State University Summer Agricultural Institute, which is currently in its 8th year, consists of teachers taking a week long course designed to enhance their understanding of agriculture in Oregon. After a day of initial study at the university, teachers are immersed in authentic, hands-on learning. They visit actual working farms and ranches, processing plants, forestry sites, and dairy farms. Additionally, each teacher spends 1 night with a family that owns and operates a farm or ranch. Teachers in the program also experience a day of role reversal as they become the students of boys and girls involved in Future Farmers of America. The teachers learn how relevant and meaningful learning takes place in the lives of these young people as they farm and raise animals.

Teachers must pay a small fee for the class but the overwhelming majority of costs are met through donations. These gifts of money, time, and resources by agricultural communities in Oregon provide the financial backbone of the program.

The institute ends with a dinner where teachers are given the opportunity to share their reflections on the week. During this evening it is common for teachers to share an increased sense of appreciation for agriculture. The advanced level of education possessed by farmers and ranchers, their commitment to responsible stewardship of the land, and their incredible work ethic leave the teachers not only impressed but touched. One teacher tearfully remarked, "Oregon's land is in good hands. Thank you."

Teachers leave the week with the necessary knowledge and motivation to develop meaningful curricula related to agriculture in Oregon. Lafona Jensen, the chairwoman of the program, Karen Stephenson, the coordinator of the program, and Dr. Lee Cole, the instructor of record, are individuals making a genuine difference in the lives of young people in Oregon.

I strongly encourage States with similar agricultural interests as Oregon to look closely at this program. The Oregon State University Summer Agricultural Institute is a model for communities desiring to design educational programs that promote authentic learning and an appreciation for the important role agriculture plays in our society.●

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 80, Senate Resolution 63.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 63) proclaiming the week of October 19 through 25, 1997, as "National Character Counts Week."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution appear in the RECORD at this point.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 63) was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

S. RES. 63

Whereas young people will be the stewards of our communities, Nation, and world in critical times, and the present and future well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good character;

Whereas concerns about the character training of children have taken on a new sense of urgency as violence by and against youth threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the Nation;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and that character counts in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good