

the White House or Democratic National Committee did not have knowledge of his efforts to raise foreign contributions. Nor is it enough to simply dismiss his activities as a poor judgment to hire him because he was inexperienced or unqualified to be vice chairman of finance of the Democratic National Committee.

His activities while at the Commerce Department in operating out of the Stevens Corp., where he both received and made telephone calls, received and sent faxes and perhaps, most suspiciously, received packages, raised continued questions. In the coming weeks, the committee will want to explore as to the nature of his activities, not simply while at the Democratic National Committee, but in the months preceding it while a Federal employee. The committee is also left with the unanswered question as to why he continued to receive briefings by the intelligence community and of what use he made of that information.

The committee is also left with questions regarding the alleged Chinese plan. While it is comforting that there is no evidence to date that policy was impacted, it is also not enough for us to rest in a comfort that it was bipartisan and not apparently solicited by either political party, based on information known to date. The question remains of whether policy was ever changed as a result of these contributions, whether the plan was actually fully implemented, and whether or not it continues. This naturally is a first priority of the committee and remains of overwhelming importance.

And questions, finally, remain with regard to John Huang. Of what use did he make of this information for corporate purposes of the Lippo Group or any other foreign interest? Were these questions both continuing before the committee and some of these preliminary issues answered?

The committee next turns its work to the National Policy Forum, its relationship with the Republican National Committee and its chairman, Haley Barbour. The committee in the coming days will receive testimony, I believe, that will indicate that Mr. Barbour, while chairman of the Republican National Committee, designed a plan, which was implemented with his participation, to solicit and eventually did receive foreign contributions in excess of \$2 million, which helped, through a series of transactions, to fund the 1994 Republican campaign to take control of the U.S. Congress. Evidence will be presented that this was an active plan, fully implemented.

After a week of testimony, therefore, we will know the extent of involvement of the Democratic and Republican National Committees in these efforts to receive foreign contributions and their impact on the 1994 and 1996 elections.

With those two phases of the committee's work completed, what we will not have done is get any closer to the question of genuine and complete cam-

paign finance reform. Several weeks have now passed since President Clinton's deadline was passed for the July 4, 1996, consideration of campaign finance reform. No campaign finance reform bill has been considered or released by any subcommittee of this Senate. No date has been set for the Senate to even begin discussion of any such genuine reform.

Indeed, there are some who would argue that the Governmental Affairs Committee deliberations are an excuse to wait until next year to even begin consideration of any campaign finance reform legislation. Using the deadline of the end of 1996 to begin consideration will assure that the 1998 Federal elections are conducted under the same campaign finance laws that bred the very problems now being discussed by the Governmental Affairs Committee. And it begs the question that, for all the important things that this Senate can learn from these hearings, all the unfortunate revelations the Senate is now experiencing, the tragic lessons the American people are now learning about this system, which Senator does not already know enough that we are raising too much money, spending too much money, and inviting both these abuses and violations of the law every day that we do not reform this system?

I know that there is a perception in our country that this failure to initiate campaign finance reform is a genuinely bipartisan problem. The American people can be forgiven for believing this because both parties have abused the system, and our hearings are resulting in learning that both the Democratic and Republican National Committees have not only violated the vested policy but clearly violated the law in this downward spiral of campaign fundraising.

It is, however, becoming less and less of a bipartisan issue when it comes to the question of reaching solutions. Last weekend, Jim Nicholson, the new chairman of the Republican National Committee, announced his opposition to banning soft money, his opposition to any limit on campaign expenditures, his opposition to controlling the costs of television. In essence, the Republican chairman of their national committee announced his opposition to any campaign finance reform.

Indeed, that mirrors our experience in the House and in the Senate. The overwhelming majority of the caucus of the Democratic Party in this Senate is prepared to vote for campaign finance reform now. It has been endorsed by our leadership. President Clinton has indicated that he would sign such legislation. Yet, only three members of the Republican caucus are prepared to even vote for campaign finance reform, and no committee chairman has been willing to bring it to consideration.

Mr. President, as our committee continues its work, we will continue to be saddened by revelations that both political parties have not challenged the best within us in raising funds for con-

ducting these campaigns. Our only comfort is that the political leadership of this institution will at some point see the need to wait no longer and begin initiating real change. There is no room in this debate for anyone to take comfort in their actions to date.

Not only have the political committees of both parties not conducted themselves in our best traditions, not only have both possibly violated the laws, but other institutions have equal fault. While the media each day reminds us of the problems of campaign financing, the cost of television advertising continues to spiral upward. The overwhelming costs of these campaigns is a result of the rising cost of television. While every night the media rails against the system, complains against the abuses, their lobbyists roam the Halls of Congress fighting efforts to control the cost of television advertising.

So, in neither party, nor in the private institutions of the media, nor in the institutions of the political parties is there any reason for pride. Only this, that there are still people in this institution in both parties who continue the investigations, Members of the Senate who are prepared to vote to change the system, people not simply who have not succeeded in the system, but Members who have succeeded, who have raised the funds, conducted successful campaigns, but still recognize that even though individuals can succeed, it does not serve the national interests.

Mr. President, the first phase of our investigation by the Governmental Affairs Committee has now concluded. We begin two more important weeks of our work. I believe we are conducting ourselves, pursuing our objective as this Senate has commanded us to do. Much has been learned. There remains much to be done. I hope every Senator will continue to follow our work, but, mostly, join us in the commitment to change this system, find those who have abused it in the past, ensure that the law is enforced, and then give the American people a political system financed by means in which they can take real pride.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998.

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I am very disappointed that we cannot stay on the bill. We have a number of Senators wishing to present amendments, so I am going to propose a unanimous-consent request. I would note that the discussions we just heard are most appropriately made in the Governmental Affairs Committee which is doing business at this time, and I am not going to answer some of what I think were partisan charges because those would best

be handled by members of the Governmental Affairs Committee. It is appropriate that we do the committee work and then move to the floor where we can have these full debates. Right now the measure before us is the VA-HUD appropriations bill, and there are serious amendments.

I now ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Minnesota be recognized to present two amendments; on the disposition of those amendments, the Senator from Colorado be recognized to offer an amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Is the Senator from Colorado going to speak extensively on this amendment because the Senator from Florida had an amendment. You might recall, I say to the Senator, the Senator from Florida had spoken to us this morning.

Mr. BOND. Let me withdraw that unanimous-consent request. I ask the Senator from Colorado how long he needs on his amendment.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Senator from Missouri for yielding. I suspect we could move on my amendment in 10 minutes.

Mr. BOND. And the Senator from Minnesota would need?

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from Minnesota I believe will be speaking for 45 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I say to my colleague, I think I can do the first amendment in about 5 minutes and I think I can do the second in about a half an hour.

Mr. BOND. All right. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Minnesota be recognized for 35 minutes to present two amendments. Following those amendments, which at this point I do not believe will necessitate a roll-call vote, then I would ask that the Senator from Colorado be recognized for 10 minutes. I do not believe there will be a rollcall vote.

Mr. ALLARD. I am not going to ask for a rollcall.

Mr. BOND. And following that I would ask that the Senator from Florida be recognized, for what length of time?

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I would only ask for 2 minutes equally divided. I have a sense of the Senate which I believe has been agreed to, and I am not going to ask for a recorded vote on that sense of the Senate.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, might I amend that unanimous-consent request to ask that, if the Senators would not mind, we do the 2 minutes equally divided for the Senator from Florida.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would say, of course not, and moreover I would say to my colleague from Colorado, since I am going to be taking close to 40 or 35 minutes, if he would like to go second since he only has 10 minutes, I will follow my colleagues.

Ms. MIKULSKI. In other words, the Senator from Minnesota yields to the Senator from Florida and then the Senator from Colorado.

I must say we really do thank the Senator from Minnesota for his co-

operation in advocating veterans and advocating us finishing the bill.

Does the Senator want to withdraw his unanimous-consent request?

Mr. BOND. I will withdraw the unanimous consent.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Start over.

Mr. BOND. I ask that the Senator from Florida be recognized for—

Mr. GRAHAM. Two minutes equally divided.

Mr. BOND. Two minutes equally divided, followed by the Senator from Colorado to be recognized for 10 minutes, followed by the Senator from Minnesota for 40 minutes.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a fellow in our office, Mary O'Brien, be given floor privileges for the pendency of this sense of the Senate.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Chair.

AMENDMENT NO. 948

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate that Congress should consider legislation concerning catastrophic natural disasters)

Mr. GRAHAM.

Mr. President, I rise today to offer a simple, straightforward sense-of-the-Senate resolution regarding natural disasters.

The rising cost of natural disasters is a ticking time bomb that we, in Congress, are doing little to address. Since 1989 the cost to taxpayers has been nearly \$40 billion.

Just this past weekend Hurricane Danny hit portions of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and my State of Florida. Although Hurricane Danny was a relatively small storm, just imagine if Hurricane Danny had been of the magnitude of a Hurricane Hugo or Andrew. The damages would be exponentially larger.

Hurricane Danny serves as a stark reminder of the ticking time bomb. We should keep in mind that we are only very early in what is expected to be an extremely active hurricane season. The time to act is sooner rather than later.

My resolution would state that it is the sense of the Senate that Congress consider legislation to deal with the rising cost of natural disaster head on—before another megadisaster occurs.

What will it take for Congress to focus on this ticking time bomb? Another Northridge earthquake that comes with a sticker price of \$8.6 billion? Another Hurricane Andrew or Hugo to cost the Federal Government \$6.2 and \$3 billion, respectively?

Helping our Nation better prepare for natural disasters will require Federal, State, and local efforts as well as initiatives from the private sector. My resolution states that Congress should consider Federal legislation embracing the following principles:

First, people living in areas that are prone to natural disasters should as-

sume a practical level of responsibility by acquiring private property insurance.

The problem is that in some areas, especially in my home State of Florida, it is very difficult for individuals to get adequate private property insurance. This leads us to the second principle.

Second, the insurance industry, in partnership with the Federal Government, should develop a new mechanism to spread the risk of natural disasters minimizing the cost of these disasters for the Federal Government. The goal of spreading the risk is to make private insurance available and affordable for everyone.

Third, a partnership should be forged between the private sector and governments at all levels to encourage better disaster preparedness and response.

No one is expecting to find a magic solution to natural disasters. The National Weather Service cannot play like the FBI's bomb squad and snip a few strategically placed wires to disarm future hurricanes. Nor can the National Science Foundation invent a way to stop the movement of tectonic plates and ensure that there will be no more earthquakes. But the Federal Government can at least begin discussing creative ways to assist States in preparing for and responding to natural disasters.

That is the intent of my resolution—to begin the discussion. We cannot continue to fund natural disaster after the fact.

We must take steps to make sure that every person in disaster prone areas has available, affordable property and casualty insurance.

We must work with the private sector to find creative ways of shifting the responsibility for the risk of disasters to the private sector and reduce the cost to the Federal Government.

We must encourage States to better prepare themselves for disasters and to have a clear game plan to respond when hit by a natural catastrophe.

In the next few days I will circulate a letter that I encourage all my colleagues to join me in signing. The letter will be sent to the U.S. Department of the Treasury asking for their assistance and guidance in developing such an initiative.

Mr. President, our Nation has been beset by an unusual series of natural disasters, some of which have occurred as recently as the past few days in Mississippi, Alabama, and my State of Florida and others earlier this year in the upper Midwest. This sense of the Senate asks that the Senate at an appropriate future time consider legislation that embodies the following principles: That persons who live in areas of risk of natural disaster should assume a practical level of personal responsibility for the risks through private insurance; second, that the insurance industry in partnership with the Federal Government and other private sector entities should establish new

mechanisms for spreading the risks of catastrophes that minimize the involvement and liability of the Federal Government; and third, a partnership should be formed between the private sector and Government at all levels to encourage better disaster preparation and respond quickly to the fiscal and financial impacts of catastrophic natural disasters.

Mr. President, the purpose of this sense of the Senate is to encourage those entities that have been working over the last 2 years to try to embody these principles into legislation that could be presented to the Congress, that in light of what has recently occurred they redouble their efforts to present to the Nation an appropriate partnership framework that would both mitigate and respond to natural disasters.

Mr. President, I send to the desk the sense-of-the-Senate resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. GRAHAM] proposes an amendment numbered 948.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 85, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following:

SEC. 423. SENSE OF THE SENATE CONCERNING CATASTROPHIC NATURAL DISASTERS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate finds that—

(1) catastrophic natural disasters are occurring with great frequency, a trend that is likely to continue for several decades according to prominent scientists:

(2) estimated damage to homes, buildings, and other structures from catastrophic natural disasters has totaled well over \$100,000,000,000 during the last decade, not including the indirect costs of the disasters such as lost productivity and economic decline;

(3) the lack of adequate planning for catastrophic natural disasters, coupled with inadequate private insurance, has led to increasing reliance on the Federal Government to provide disaster relief, including the appropriation of \$40,000,000,000 in supplemental funding since 1989;

(4) in the foreseeable future, a strong likelihood exists that the United States will experience a megacatastrophe, the impact of which would cause widespread economic disruption for homeowners and businesses and enormous cost to the Federal Government; and

(5) the Federal Government has failed to anticipate catastrophic natural disasters and take comprehensive action to reduce their impact.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that Congress should consider legislation that embodies the following principles:

(1) Persons who live in areas at risk of natural disaster should assume a practical level of personal responsibility for the risks through private insurance.

(2) The insurance industry, in partnership with the Federal Government and other private sector entities, should establish new mechanisms for the spreading of the risk of

catastrophes that minimize the involvement and liability of the Federal Government.

(3) A partnership should be formed between the private sector and government at all levels to encourage better disaster preparation and respond quickly to the physical and financial impacts of catastrophic natural disasters.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on amendment No. 948 offered by the Senator from Florida?

Mr. BOND. No objection.

Ms. MIKULSKI. No objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 948.

The amendment (No. 948) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. GRAHAM. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to extend my appreciation to the managers of the bill and to my colleagues for allowing expedited consideration of this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Chair.

We do not have a pending amendment in the Chamber, do we?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, actually, I believe we do, which is the Bumpers amendment. So I ask unanimous consent that the Bumpers amendment be laid aside until the conclusion of the debate on the Wellstone amendments, and at such time as we take up the ongoing debate on the Bumpers amendment on the space station.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 947

(Purpose: To make an amendment relating to the use of public housing operating funds to provide tenant-based assistance)

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Chair. I have an amendment at the desk numbered 947. I request that it be reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. ALLARD] proposes an amendment numbered 947.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 21, line 16, insert before the period at the end the following: “: *Provided further*, That of the total amount made available under this heading, \$290,000,000 shall be made available for tenant-based assistance in accordance with section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937”.

Mr. ALLARD. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, today I file an amendment to provide for more public housing vouchers.

The original intent of the Federal housing assistance program was to provide temporary housing to poor indi-

viduals and families. Since its inception, the Federal housing program has grown to become a \$25 billion entity.

In my view, the section 8 voucher program is the best means for low-income families to find secure, affordable rental housing. The section 8 certificate or voucher program first began in 1974 and has grown to serve over 1.5 million low-income families today. These families are empowered with the choice of where they want to live and are given the freedom to determine what surroundings they desire. Section 8 housing is the preferable means of providing affordable housing to low-income individuals. Vouchers enjoy wide support including past Republican and Democrat administrations alike. In fact, the current Secretary of HUD, Secretary Andrew Cuomo, supports an expanded voucher program.

Vouchers are very popular, which is demonstrated by the 1.5 million families who are currently using vouchers or certificates. Vouchers empower individuals and promote competition within the public housing authority and within the community, thereby lowering costs and improving conditions for the residents. Vouchers or other alternatives can be less expensive than the current public housing program. They can save the Government money and improve conditions for the tenants.

Studies have indicated that project-based housing assistance costs more on average than the voucher housing program for each family that is assisted. In fact, the findings of the June 1995 GAO report indicated that the cost of housing vouchers is 10 percent less than the cost of public housing. This study clearly demonstrated that on a national average, the section 8 tenant-based housing is cheaper than the public-unit housing program. In fact, one can say that the savings from the movement to vouchers could lead to an annual savings of \$640 million per year and could be applied to over 100,000 low-income families for housing assistance.

I am a member of the Housing Subcommittee which is currently putting the final touches on authorization language for a new public housing bill. I have proposed that this approach be included in that bill. Under my proposal, 10 percent of public housing operating funds that are distributed to each public housing authority would be made available for those who want vouchers. Nothing would be required or mandated. It is simply a choice given to the resident. In fact, we make clear that any unexpended amounts set aside for vouchers would be used by the public housing authorities for normal operating funds.

Quite frankly, I really do not know how anyone could oppose this provision unless they are just opposed to giving people a choice and an opportunity. The language that I have proposed in committee also would establish a preference for crime victims. It states that a voucher would be made available to

any resident of public housing who is the victim of a crime of violence that has been reported to law enforcement. People should have the option of vouchers when their housing is unsafe.

My objective here today is to alert the appropriators to my interest in this matter and in my strong belief that we should increase the pace at which we move ahead with the conversion of housing from the old central planning and concentrated public housing model to one of choice and opportunity through vouchers.

My view is that, whenever practical, programs should be properly authorized before funds are appropriated. Therefore, I am not going to push forward here today on this issue. I will continue my work on the authorizing committee to get this choice added to the law and my efforts will be devoted to getting this done in the next several months through the public housing reform bill.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I now withdraw my amendment.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, let me express my appreciation to—I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Colorado for withdrawing the amendment. He has described some of the very difficult challenges which face both this committee and the housing subcommittee. We have a difficulty of ensuring that those people who are in public housing and do not have an option or some place to go with a section 8 certificate do not have their services cut. So we have people who are in significant numbers in public housing. We have to care for them as we look for better ways. We have worked on public housing reform and look forward to working with the Senator from Colorado on these reforms and other measures. I thank him for raising the question with us.

Mr. ALLARD. If the Senator will yield, I thank the chairman for his efforts. I know he has a tough job, and I respect his responsibilities in that regard.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Senator.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Colorado for not pressing for a vote on this amendment, how to use the taxpayer's dollar to really create not only opportunity in public housing but also how we can end the cycle of poverty, the culture of poverty, and for public housing to be a way to a better life. I am glad the authorizers are going to consider the bill. I look forward to listening to the recommendations. I know the senior Senator from Maryland is the ranking member and we will have many spirited discussions. So how best to provide for the poor, particularly also the working poor, is, indeed, a great challenge. We do not want to repeat mistakes in the future, but we also do not want to create new mis-

takes in the future. So the authorizing bill is a great way to do it.

I thank the Senator from Colorado for his spirited advocacy and also for withdrawing the amendment. I yield the floor.

The amendment (No. 947) was withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 949

(Purpose: To state the sense of the Senate regarding the appropriations for discretionary activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal years 1999 through 2002)

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE], for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI, proposes an amendment numbered 949.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 85, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following:

SEC. 423. it is the sense of the Senate that Congress should appropriate for the Department of Veterans Affairs for discretionary activities in each of fiscal years 1999 through 2002 an amount equal to the amount required by the Department in such fiscal year for such activities.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of myself and Senator MIKULSKI.

First of all, I rise on the floor of the Senate to commend the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA-HUD and Independent Agencies for restoring \$273 million in cuts in veterans discretionary programs, and to include health care for fiscal year 1998.

Above and beyond this, let me also commend the committee for adding an additional \$92.9 million above the President's budget request. This is a victory for veterans and their families, and it is a step in the right direction.

We have been fighting to restore these cuts for 1998. When we first found out that in the budget resolution there were proposed cuts over the next 5 years, we held a forum out in Minnesota and, really, the veterans community was unanimous in denouncing these cuts. We circulated a letter, signed by colleagues, to the appropriations subcommittee. We have some appropriators here who are clearly strong advocates for veterans, and I thank them.

We offered an amendment to the DOD authorization to transfer excess funding from the Pentagon to VA health care. We did not win on that amendment, but I thank the PVA, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the DAV, Disabled Veterans of America, and, in addition, I would also like to thank the Vietnam Veterans of America for their support.

Now, what we have in this appropriations bill is a restoration of the \$273 million, and adding another \$92 million. That is good news for veterans and their families. Again, I commend my colleagues, and I thank DAV and PVA and Vietnam Vets and the other organizations for helping me and helping other Senators in restoring this funding.

However, I remain deeply concerned about cuts in funding for veterans discretionary programs, health care programs, in the outyears, 1999 through 2002, which were agreed to in the bipartisan budget deal. So what this amendment essentially says to veterans is: Don't worry, because we go on record that your health care will be secure going into the next century.

This amendment is a sense-of-the-Senate amendment which says that the Senate ensures its promises for veterans. It promises veterans that over the next 4 years, 1999 to 2002, the veterans' medical system will receive the resources it requires—I put that in bold letters—to deliver quality health care to our Nation's veterans. As I think about this budget deal, if we do not at least have a sense-of-the-Senate amendment, then we are talking about, in the outyears, cuts of about \$2 billion from the President's request; or, another way of looking at it, it would be close to \$3 billion from 1997 funding levels.

It is wrong. We know it. This amendment I have introduced for myself and Senator MIKULSKI puts the Senate on record as saying these cuts are wrong and making it clear we go on record that we will provide the VA health care system with the resources it needs to provide as good care as possible—quality care, we hope and pray—for veterans, going into the 21st century.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. If there be no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendment by the Senator from Minnesota.

The amendment (No. 949) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 950

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I am now about to send to the desk a second amendment, which really has two provisions. The first is that within 30 days after enactment of this act, we get a CBO study that would provide to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Senate Appropriations Committee an estimate of the cost of the provision in this amendment. The second part is that not later than 60 days after enactment of this bill, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs shall hold one or more hearings to consider legislation that would add the following diseases, which would now be presumptive, from the point of view of coverage: lung cancer, bone cancer,

skin cancer, colon cancer, kidney cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, nonmalignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer.

I send this amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. WELLSTONE] proposes an amendment numbered 950.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

(A) Not later than 60 days after enactment of this act, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs shall hold hearings to consider legislation which would add the following diseases at the end of Section 1112(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code.

Lung cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, colon cancer, kidney cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, non-malignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer.

(B) No later than 30 days after enactment of this act, the Congressional Budget Office shall provide to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Senate Appropriations Committee an estimate of the cost of the provision contained in (A).

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, today I am offering an amendment that will aid atomic veterans—veterans who were exposed to ionizing radiation while serving on active duty. Atomic veterans who may well be America's most neglected veterans. They have been seeking justice for as long as 50 years and I am determined to help them, and I think my colleagues are determined to help them.

Mr. President, I want to dedicate this amendment to the brave and patriotic Minnesotans who served in the U.S. Army's 216th Chemical Service Company, participating in Operation Tumbler Snapper—a series of eight nuclear weapons tests that took place in the Nevada desert in 1952. In particular, I want to pay tribute to two former members of the Forgotten 216th, Smoky Parrish and Gene Toronto, patriotic Americans who have been my mentors and have fought hard to fair and just treatment for all atomic veterans.

I want to say to them and their families and to other families of atomic veterans that I will do all in my power as a U.S. Senator to ensure the Forgotten 216th and other veterans like them are never forgotten again.

Before I discuss the substance of my amendment I would like to tell my colleagues more about the Forgotten 216th because their problems typify the problems of atomic veterans nationwide. When they participated in Operation Tumbler Snapper, they believed their Government's assurances that it

would protect them against any harm, but have since become convinced they were used as guinea pigs without any concern for their safety. My colleague from Maryland said to me earlier, and I hope it's OK to repeat this, in a sense it was like the Tuskegee experiment.

Immediately after a nuclear bomb blast, many were sent to measure fallout at or near ground zero, exposing them to so much radiation that their Geiger counters went off the scale while they inhaled and ingested radioactive particles. Members of the 216th were given minimal protection, sometimes even lacking film badges to measure radiation exposure and provided with no information on the perils they faced. Furthermore, they were sworn to secrecy about their participation in nuclear tests, sometimes denied access to their own service medical records, and provided no medical followup to ensure they'd suffered no ill effects as a result of their exposure to radiation. This happened in our country. Sadly, many members of the 216th have already died, often of cancer. Is it any wonder that these men now refer to themselves as the Forgotten 216th?

Mr. President, my amendment is intended to address some of the recommendations of the "Final Report of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments" issued in October 1995. I had an opportunity to testify before this committee about the atomic vets.

The report's recommendations mirrored the concerns atomic veterans have had for many years: the list of presumptive diseases contained in law is incomplete and inadequate; the standard of proof for those without presumptive disease is impossible to meet; and these statutes are limited and inequitable in their coverage.

The VA now maintains two lists of radiogenic diseases, a presumptive list established under Public Law 101-321 as amended by Public Law 102-578 and now consisting of 15 radiogenic diseases, and a nonpresumptive list established under Public Law 98-542 which includes 11 diseases not on the presumptive list. My amendment would add these 11 diseases to the presumptive list, would result in the elimination of the nonpresumptive list, and the creation of a single presumptive list of radiogenic diseases. The radiogenic diseases that would be added to the presumptive list are: lung cancer, bone cancer, skin cancer, colon cancer, kidney cancer, posterior subcapsular cataracts, non-malignant thyroid nodular disease, ovarian cancer, parathyroid adenoma, tumors of the brain and central nervous system, and rectal cancer. These veterans were exposed to this radiation. They went to ground zero. They were put in harm's way by our Government. They were never told that anything terrible would happen to them. But so many of them have had cancer, so many of their children and grandchildren have been born with a variety of different disorders

and problems, the least we can do, the least we can do is make sure that they receive good care and adequate compensation.

Why the need for these changes? To begin with veterans must jump through hoops to demonstrate they are eligible for compensation for non-presumptive diseases and, after they have done so the chances that the VA will approve their claims are minuscule.

Mr. President, to illustrate what I mean, permit me to cite some VA statistics. As of April 1, 1996, out of the hundreds of thousands of atomic veterans there have been a total of 18,515 radiation claim cases, with service-connection granted in 1,886 cases. According to VA statistics current as of December 1, 1995, only 463 involve the granting of presumptive service-connection. Thus, if we were to exclude the 463 veterans who were granted presumptive service-connection, atomic veterans had an incredibly low claims approval rate of less than 8 percent. Moreover, of this low percentage, an indeterminate percentage may have had their claims granted for diseases unrelated to radiation exposure.

Why the abysmally low percentage of claims approvals? One key reason is that VA regulations are overly stringent for service-connection for non-presumptive radiogenic diseases. Dose requirements pose a particularly difficult, if not insuperable hurdle. While it is almost impossible to come up with accurate dose reconstructions because decades have elapsed since the nuclear detonations and adequate records don't exist, veterans are frequently denied compensation because their radiation exposure levels are allegedly too low. In this connection, let me quote from the findings of the President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments: "The Government did not create or maintain adequate records regarding the exposure of all participants in [nuclear weapons tests and] the identify and test locales of all participants." This finding obviously calls into question the capability of the Government to come up with accurate dose reconstructions on which approval of claims for VA compensation for atomic veterans frequently depend. My amendment essentially says two things. First of all, what we are saying now is that we call on CBO to do this study and provide us with an estimate of the costs of this provision, and that is done within 30 days. And then, not later than 60 days after enactment of this act, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs is to hold one or more hearings to consider this legislation.

Mr. President, my amendment will ensure that the VA fulfills its responsibility to give atomic veterans the benefit of the doubt in considering their claims for compensation. This is especially important because after more than 50 years there is still much about the effects of low-level radiation that is the subject of scientific controversy.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I've fought hard to enable Persian Gulf veterans to receive compensation for diseases that may be linked to their service in the Persian Gulf, at least until scientists reach a definitive conclusion about the etiology of their illnesses. I've also strongly and consistently supported former Secretary Jesse Brown's efforts to ensure that Vietnam veterans are compensated for disabilities linked to their exposure to agent orange, even though science is still unable to determine the extent of their exposure. There is no question in my mind that both Persian Gulf and Vietnam veterans deserve such compensation. At the same time, I believe that the U.S. Government must give atomic veterans the same benefit of the doubt. Unfortunately, right now, this is not the case.

Let me give one example of the discriminatory treatment of atomic veterans concerns, and that is the VA's 1993 decision to grant VA benefits based on presumptive service connection to veterans exposed to agent orange who have contracted lung cancer, a decision which I fully back, but for atomic veterans, the VA still treats lung cancer as a nonpresumptive illness.

Mr. President, I say to my colleagues, we know what happened to them. They went to ground zero. They had no protective gear. They were exposed to this radiation. Why in the world has it taken us so long—they are still waiting after 40 and 45 years—to make sure they get the care they deserve and make sure they get the compensation they deserve?

Mr. President, we just have to do better. Let me reiterate, I fully supported the decision of the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to recommend to the President that lung cancer be treated presumptively as a service-connected condition for agent orange. I wish Secretary Jesse Brown was still with us. He probably was my best friend in the administration, in Government. He was a strong advocate for veterans. I am simply pointing out that we are not giving the atomic veterans the same treatment, and it is patently unfair.

Since January 1994, I have had a lot of meetings with members of the Forgotten 216th. I have met with their families. I met with their children. I met with their grandchildren. Let me just be very honest about this. Many of them are up there in age now. They are elderly. They may not have that many more years to live. But it is incredible to me that we have let this shameful episode in the history of our country go on by never fully acknowledging what we did to them and never providing these veterans and their families with the compassion and care that they deserve.

I don't think it is too strong for me to say that our Government lied to them. I don't think it is unfair for me to say that for 45 years, or thereabouts, we still have not given them a fair

shake. Justice delayed is justice denied. The atomic veterans are not the strongest veterans organization in our country. They don't have that much clout. Many of my friends who were atomic veterans right now have cancer. Many of them are not in good health. Many of them have already died.

They are not, in short, a strong lobby. But, Mr. President, I am telling you, I had a chance to talk to some of the atomic vets before coming out on the floor of the Senate. I had a chance to talk with my colleague from Maryland, and she really helped me with this amendment. She said to me, "Senator WELLSTONE, if you think about it in steps, it makes more sense. First, we get the CBO study, and we make it clear we want that study, we want to know what it costs, so we are not just putting veterans in parentheses, out of sight out of mind. And then have some closure and make it clear that within 60 days the Committee on Veterans' Affairs will hold hearings and consider legislation that moves this forward."

For some colleagues, and in a way for myself because I am always so impatient, who say, "Well, but it doesn't guarantee the result," that is true, but these atomic veterans have been so out of sight and so out of mind for so long that I really think this would be a really good, positive step that the U.S. Senate would be taking.

I don't know whether there will be opposition or not to the amendment. I hope there will be strong support for it. I really think this is the right thing to do. I am convinced that if every single Senator on the floor of the Senate, Republican and Democrat alike, had full knowledge of this history and full knowledge of what these veterans have gone through and full knowledge of the terrible illnesses in their families—it is really awful. This amendment doesn't even cover, I say to my colleague from Maryland, some of the pattern of disabilities and illnesses of children and grandchildren, which is frightening to me.

I just don't know, I am not prepared to say what has happened genetically within families. I don't know. I am not a doctor, and I am sure there is probably disagreement about it. But what there shouldn't be disagreement about is that these veterans deserve better. These atomic veterans are veterans. These atomic veterans deserve better from our Government, they deserve better from our country, and it is time that we take action that would be a first major step toward providing them with the compensation and care which they truly deserve.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank our distinguished colleague from Minnesota for bringing the plight of this group of veterans before us. He has made a very compelling case for the difficulties they have faced.

I believe that the approach he has worked out with the ranking member is a responsible approach. The version I have before me directs the CBO to present the study to the Committee on Veterans Affairs within 30 days and directs the Committee on Veterans Affairs to hold hearings within 60 days. I think that is an appropriate means of moving forward on this issue.

I thank him for bringing it to our attention, and we have no objection to accepting the amendment on this side.

Ms. MIKULSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, what a moving story, what a moving story to hear about the Forgotten 216th. I am sure that this has been a considerable heartbreak for every member of that unit who went to ground zero. I am sure they went with good faith in themselves and in their Government, and yet over the last 45 years, they have endured terrible blows from their Government—one, the blow of exposing them to intense radiation with no protective gear; the second, that for 45 years, the very validity of their concerns about what happened to them and their need for medical treatment were, again, rejected by their U.S. Government.

I thank the Senator for this type of amendment, because I will tell you today, I didn't want to, because of a budget situation, have to vote to reject them one more time. I think just as you have heard now from the chairman of the committee, we are going to take your amendment. We like your amendment, and I will tell you why we like your amendment. One, we are going to get to the facts about what this will cost, because too often, as the Senator from Minnesota knows, compelling human need gets all entangled over cost. This way we will know the cost. But then by asking the Veterans Affairs Committee to hold hearings within 60 days, it is a bit of a hammer, if you will, to ensure that there will be, as in our democracy, a public hearing on this.

I say to my colleague from Minnesota that it has been my observation in 20 years—10 in the House and now over 10 in the Senate—that the VA, when it came to compensation for what our veterans were exposed to, never acted on their own. They only acted because Congress pushed for the facts.

I thank the Senator from Minnesota for pushing for the facts in terms of this situation, the facts on cost, the facts on what happened to them, and the facts on the consequences to these veterans and how we need to address them.

I say to my colleagues in the VA, not the committee, but in the Veterans' Administration, if you are listening to the debate, don't see this as a problem; see this as an opportunity, because here we can have one of the most unique longitudinal studies of what happened to men who were fit for duty

when they walked at ground zero, and then what were their health consequences to both themselves and to their beloved wives, as well as to their children and their grandchildren.

What a unique opportunity for both veterans, the Centers for Disease Control, and even NIH to welcome these men, to embrace these men as we try to redress the grievance that happened to them, and the lessons learned so that we then know what radiation did to people and offer insights that could help other people who have been exposed to radiation. So I thank the Senator for his amendment. I thank the Senator for his advocacy in this area. I look forward to accepting the amendment, and I look forward to hearing the CBO and the VA Committee's report.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank both my colleagues. I think 30 days CBO and in 60 days Veterans' Committee hearings in considering legislation moves us forward in a significant way. I thank both of my colleagues for their support. I thank the Senator from Maryland especially for some of her assistance in working on this amendment. I hope both my colleagues will please help us keep this in conference. I don't want this to be one of those things that it happens on the floor and then, goodbye, it is gone. I don't want to do that to these veterans. I think we will have strong support from both of our colleagues.

Mr. President, I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 950) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Minnesota, who completed his amendments more quickly than we thought. We have colleagues coming to the floor who are sequenced to follow the Senator from Minnesota. Since Senator BUMPERS has not yet reached the floor, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MIKULSKI be recognized to offer an amendment on her behalf and mine and on behalf of the minority leader. I think that amendment should take less than 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Maryland.

AMENDMENT NO. 951

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment on behalf of my-

self and Senator DASCHLE. I send the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], for herself, Mr. DASCHLE, and Mr. BOND, proposes an amendment numbered 951.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 16, line 21, strike "\$10,693,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$10,653,000,000."

On page 17, line 7, strike "\$1,150,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$1,110,000,000."

On page 33, after line 23, insert the following new heading:

"EMPOWERMENT ZONES AND ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES

"For grants to Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, to be designated by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to continue efforts to stimulate economic opportunity in America's distressed communities, \$25,000,000, to remain available until expended."

On page 53 line 22, strike "\$400,500,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$420,500,000."

On page 55, line 14, insert after the colon the following: "Provided further, That \$20,000,000 shall be available for the America Reads Initiative."

On page 67, line 9, strike "\$202,146,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$207,146,000."

On page 67, line 9, insert the following before the period: "Provided further, That for purposes of pre-disaster mitigation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 5131 (b) and (c) and 42 U.S.C. 5196 (e) and (i), \$5,000,000 of the funds made available under this heading shall be available until expended for project grants for State and local governments."

On page 72, line 1, strike "\$2,513,200,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$2,503,200,000."

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I wish to bring to my colleagues' attention that this amendment is Mikulski-Daschle-Bond amendment. It is being offered in concurrence with the chairman of the committee.

What this does is provide funding for empowerment zones, the "America Reads" initiative and FEMA disaster mitigation.

I want to note that the money that we provide is indeed a modest fund, but it, indeed, enables us to state that these are three priorities we wanted to consider in the appropriations, that we would have normally had a larger funding had the budget agreement not given us such a skimpy allocation.

What does this amendment do?

It provides \$25 million to HUD for a new round of empowerment zones and enterprise communities.

It also provides \$20 million for the America Reads initiative at the Corporation for National Service.

And it provides \$5 million for FEMA's predisaster mitigation program.

Mr. President, while this amendment provides funding for these three separate programs, we must remember that each of these three programs have in common, namely, that they really do directly assist the residents of our Nation with their day-to-day needs.

First, Mr. President, this amendment, in providing \$25 million for a second round of empowerment zones and enterprise communities, would promote job creation and economic development in economically distressed urban and rural areas.

I am sure that we would all agree this is a critical need. Unfortunately, probably every Senator here has an area in their State that is economically distressed—urban, rural, or both.

The first round of the program covered American communities of which 72 urban and 23 rural communities were either designated empowerment zones or enterprise communities.

Mr. President, what this money actually goes for, though, is job creation, economic development, job training, and empowerment of local residents. The empowerment zone is not a quick fix, but it does offer opportunity and hope.

In the area of America Reads, this amendment also provides \$20 million for the America Reads initiative. This money would support 1,300 additional Corporation members who would serve as tutor coordinators. These tutor coordinators would provide direct tutoring and help mobilize and coordinate thousands of tutors to work with young children across the country.

What is the purpose of the America Reads initiative? It is to help with local school systems to make sure that every child in the United States can read by the time they are in the third grade.

It is the administration's policy, and I know supported on a bipartisan basis, that we want to see every child in the United States of America immunized by the time they are 2, screened and school-ready by the time they are 6, can read by the time they are in the third grade, and know how to use and have access to a computer by the time they are 12. That would enable our children to be ready for the 21st century.

But let us be clear. It is not the Federal Government's job to supplant local school systems. What the America Reads initiative does is mobilize volunteer efforts, provide the infrastructure to be able to greatly utilize volunteers and, in addition to local school efforts, to help our kids read. In no way will it supplant local school efforts nor local school board policies. So it will be one of the better of the Federal and local partnerships.

Mr. President, also, let us turn to Federal predisaster mitigation. I note that the Presiding Officer is from Pennsylvania. We have sure lived through a lot of floods the last 2 years. And it has been wonderful when FEMA has been able to respond "911" to our States. I know what Missouri endured, what our colleagues in the Dakotas and 12 other States did.

But, you know, some Federal funds used wisely could actually prevent damage to either personal property or

small business if we did some infrastructure planning. What this amendment does is provide \$5 million for predisaster mitigation activities at FEMA.

Last year, we provided \$2 million for a pilot program identifying communities that could benefit from the money and build on it. Mr. President, this is a modest amount of money, but I believe will help tremendously in the future.

In California, if we insist that earthquake standards are met, it then saves money when an earthquake hits.

In Dade County, the officials there have a mitigation program to protect structures against hurricane force winds.

And in my own State of Maryland, we had a unique partnership between the Governor of the State of Maryland and the Corps of Engineers to do a flood mitigation task force up in western Maryland where Pennsylvania and West Virginia coincide, and, in the area of the great floods, collided.

So, Mr. President, this modest amount of money would really go a long way in helping us assess what we need to do to protect small business and personal property. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and I believe a dollar's worth of prevention will ultimately help us save \$100 in disaster relief.

Mr. President, as I stated, this amendment provides funding for three important programs:

First, the amendment provides \$25 million to HUD for a new round of empowerment zones and enterprise communities.

The amendment also provides \$20 million for America Reads Initiative activities at the Corporation for National Service.

And the amendment provides \$5 million for FEMA's predisaster mitigation program.

Mr. President, while this amendment provides funding for three separate programs, we must remember what each of these programs have in common, namely, they all aim to directly assist residents of our great Nation.

First Mr. President, this amendment would provide \$25 million for a new round of empowerment zones and enterprise communities administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The first round of empowerment zones were awarded in December 1994. The goal is to promote job creation and economic development in economically distressed urban and rural areas.

I am sure we would all agree this is a critical need. Unfortunately, probably every Senator in here has an area in their State that is an economically distressed area—urban, rural, or both.

The first round of the program covered a wide range of American communities. Seventy-two urban areas and 33 rural communities were designated empowerment zones or enterprise communities.

There are currently eight urban empowerment zones and three rural empowerment zones. There are also 4 enhanced enterprise communities and 93 enterprise communities.

Each empowerment zone received \$100 million—Los Angeles received \$125 million. Cleveland \$90 million—each enhanced enterprise community received \$25 million, and the 93 enterprise communities received \$3 million.

This money can be used for job creation and economic development activities—such as building renovations and infrastructure improvements. The money can also be used to provide services such as child care, job training and transportation for residents in the zones.

In addition to the grant money, in each empowerment zone and enterprise community, employers are eligible for wage tax credits worth \$3,000 for every employee hired who lives in the empowerment zone. The program is not just about moving employees from one location to another, it is also about providing employers incentives to help unemployed and underemployed zone residents.

We are talking about a hand up, not a hand out. The tax credit provision is designed to provide an opportunity structure, a chance to work hard and earn a decent living.

Empowerment zones and enterprise communities are also eligible for various other benefits including tax-exempt bond financing and tax writeoffs for depreciating personal property.

Mr. President, the empowerment zone program is not a quick fix. Many of the communities are ones that have suffered for years from high unemployment, high crime, and other problems. The program is a 10-year effort that required partnerships between community residents, local and State governments, and local businesses.

A recent GAO report noted that the zones have made some progress. The report notes that there is still work to be done, but the effort is progressing. The key is that the program is making progress and its deficiencies are ones that can be addressed.

In its own assessment of the empowerment zones and enterprise communities, HUD notified five communities that they were not making sufficient progress. These communities risk having future funding withdrawn. The point is that this is not some HUD program run wild. There are standards and expectations that are being measured.

Mr. President, the empowerment zone program is a good mix of Republican and Democratic ideas—tax incentives to leverage private dollars and community involvement in decision-making.

Mr. President, this amendment also provides \$20 million for the America Reads Initiative at the Corporation for National Service. This money would support approximately 1,300 additional corporation members who would serve as tutor coordinators.

These tutor coordinators would provide direct tutoring and help to mobilize and coordinate thousands of tutors to work with young children across the country.

The America Reads initiative is an administration effort that is truly worthy of bipartisan support. The goal is simple—every child in the Nation should be able to read independently and read well by the third grade. A simple, yet key goal in the effort to ensure that every child is equipped with the basic tools needed to compete in the 21st century.

Mr. President, in 1994, 40 percent of fourth graders failed to attain the basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. This is a fact that we can't ignore and must address.

Let me be clear, the reading deficiencies of our Nation's children won't be erased with volunteer tutors. There are issues of education funding and the delivery of education that need to be addressed. I am under no illusion that the America Reads initiative is the only answer.

But Mr. President, I don't want us to make the perfect enemy of the good. The America Reads initiative is part of the answer. A Cohen, Kulik and Kulik analysis of 65 published studies showed that quality tutoring programs produced positive, though modest effects. Other studies done in Florida and England have found similar results.

Mr. President, modest is in the eye of the beholder. If I am rich and only see a modest return on my stock investment, I may be disappointed. But if I am a child who can't read like I should be able to, and someone helps me improve my reading modestly so that I can understand words on a page, I am probably very happy with my modest gains.

Mr. President, there have been many debates about the corporation for National Service. This amendment moves beyond that debate. The program will be funded and will continue to operate. This amendment seeks to provide some additional funding to support corporation activities that I am sure we all agree are worthwhile.

Finally Mr. President, this amendment also provides \$5 million for predisaster mitigation activities at FEMA.

Mr. President, I don't know if there is a clearer example of "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." To put it in appropriations terms one might say that "a dime of prevention is worth a dollar of cure."

Currently, FEMA provides postdisaster mitigation money to communities—up to 15 percent of the amount they received for disaster recovery efforts. This money is important and necessary, but its' flaw is that it comes after a disaster has struck.

Last year, the VA-HUD bill provides FEMA \$2 million to begin a pilot program identifying communities that could benefit from predisaster mitigation money. This amendment seeks to

provide money that would expand on that effort.

Unfortunately, every Senators' State has likely placed a "911" call to FEMA. Many times, there is nothing that we can do to escape nature's fury. However, all too often, there are things that we can do to reduce the risk to life and property. From making sure buildings meet proper standards to moving structures out of high-risk areas, there are things we can do.

Retrofitting a bridge in California to meet earthquake standards costs about \$31 a square foot. Replacing a bridge that didn't meet standards would cost about \$135 per square foot.

In Dade County, FL, officials have a mitigation program designed to protect structures from hurricane force winds. A cost-benefit analysis showed that for every \$1 dollar in mitigation money invested to protect an emergency housing center, \$5 in future damage relief costs are likely saved.

Mr. President, there are other examples I could site. The point is that the predisaster mitigation program is ultimately about saving lives, saving communities, and saving taxpayers' money.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment. It is designed to help provide opportunity structures and economic development for our Nation's distressed urban and rural communities through the empowerment zone and enterprise communities program.

The amendment also provides support for the critical America Read initiative—designed to help ensure that all of the Nation's children can read properly by the fourth grade.

Finally, the amendment provides support to a predisaster mitigation program designed to save lives, save communities and save taxpayers' money.

Mr. President, I believe this amendment addresses concerns that transcend party lines. It is designed to support programs that directly impact the citizens of our Nation.

I want to especially thank Senator DASCHLE for his support, and Senator BOND for his willingness to work with me on this important effort. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. President, I hope that we can move expeditiously and adopt this amendment and make a great step forward in giving empowerment and help to our local communities.

Mr. BOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I am delighted to be able to rise in support of the amendment and be a cosponsor with the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from South Dakota.

As indicated, it has a modest amount of funding, \$25 million, for HUD empowerment zones, \$20 million for America Reads and \$5 million for FEMA disaster mitigation. The funding is offset with budget authority from

section 8 contract amendments, and the outlays are off set from the NASA mission support account, if anybody cares, but it is offset. And we particularly thank Senators MIKULSKI and DASCHLE for working together to make this a good bipartisan bill.

While the funding for this amendment is modest, I emphasize that it covers a number of important issues, from child literacy to disaster mitigation to the economic development of distressed communities through empowerment zones. While I have some concerns about how programs are set up and authorized, this, I think, is a very constructive way to move the bill forward.

Let me address the question of America Reads. We do not yet know the full outlines of the program the President is considering. I hope he will send forth authorizing legislation. That is the best way to do it, I think, is to get legislation establishing the parameters of the program. But let me say how important the objective is. The objective is to get people to read to small children, parents to read to their children. Officials in schools are engaged in teaching reading, but caregivers in day care centers and elsewhere must read to children.

As one who has spent a lot of time working on early childhood development—and I have to say that our national award-winning and recognized Missouri Parents as Teachers Program has demonstrated how effective this can be—I believe that reading to children from the youngest age gets their interest, their attention, and their enthusiasm in the written word, and puts them on to a lifetime of reading, which will open up opportunities, knowledge, information, and great joy for their entire lifetime.

If there is one thing that is the thread that seems to hold together all of the successful programs of getting children off to a good start, it is reading to them. It is communicating to them from the written word and attracting their attention to the written word as a means of communication.

Were we not in the middle of a very, very important process to pass this appropriations measure, I could talk a lot longer about the importance of reading to very young children. Let me just say that reading to young children—there is no finer objective. The money we have appropriated here is a symbol of the importance that we place on this activity.

The VA-HUD appropriations bill is a very tight allocation. We have had to have difficult funding choices. I hope that we made good consensus choices for what most Members consider the primary needs and concerns facing the VA-HUD are. I hope, however, that this amendment will keep the dialog moving on a path to enactment.

With that, Mr. President, I do not see any other Senators wishing to speak on this amendment, certainly not in opposition to it.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I'd like to congratulate Senator MIKULSKI on her amendment providing \$20 million for America Reads under the VA-HUD Appropriations Act.

There is no more important skill we can give young people in this country than the ability to read. If a child can read quickly and accurately early in her school career, all other challenges will be much easier for them in school and in life.

I have been working for some time to bring literacy issues before the Senate, from the amendment Senator Simon and I offered to last year's welfare bill, to my work on the Appropriations Committee, to the educational briefings I host for congressional staff.

Recently, these briefings have included information from Dr. Reid Lyon from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. We now know from the research that the process of reading involves several steps. A student must acquire skills in a logical progression, and in a timely manner, in order to be able to read quickly and effectively enough to make sense of what she reads. Once this process has occurred, reading becomes a tool for learning. If this process does not occur, the prospect of helping her learn to read becomes much more difficult.

This and other evidence from research must inform what we do with regard to children's literacy. We must assure that we take advantage of the political will to improve children's literacy, by putting into place a national effort that reflects what we know. It must reflect what we know about how children learn, how important family literacy is to the literacy of the child, and what we know about how volunteer efforts work in our communities, among other things.

In order to build a successful volunteer effort, which must be part of what we do for children's literacy, we need to look at all the aspects of the effort. In what capacity will volunteers be working with students? How will the primary reading teacher be involved? What about reading specialists? How will research inform what happens in the classroom, or in afterschool or summer programs using volunteers? Where will we find volunteers in communities already taxed for help? How will they be trained in providing literacy assistance, in recruiting volunteers, or in coordinating community programs?

By simply including AmeriCorps in our efforts to improve children's literacy, we don't answer all of these questions, but we do answer some. We do call on experience already in our communities—in training, recruiting, and coordinating volunteers, in providing programs that help people learn to read, and to gain success in other areas of their lives. We do call on an incredible resource for improving people's engagement in their communities, and for improving their skills.

Literacy AmeriCorps has been very successful in my home State of Washington, in doing things like setting up talk times for people with limited English proficiency to talk with one another in English, and practice what they are learning with other people, on topics that interest them. Community support is there—and that gives us a great base to expand on as we look to improve children's literacy.

AmeriCorps has demonstrated success in many areas across the country; now it is time to enlist AmeriCorps in our efforts to help children learn to read. AmeriCorps is a much-needed ally in a complicated, difficult, and crucial endeavor.

Again, I want to congratulate Senator MIKULSKI on her amendment, and encourage all of the Members of the Senate to work with us to improve children's literacy this year.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Let us move for its adoption.

Mr. BOND. I think we are prepared to move to its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 951) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 944

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think the time has come for us to move on to the Bumpers amendment.

I will propose a unanimous-consent request that would set the vote for 5:30. We would ask for Senator BUMPERS to be allocated 15 minutes in support of his amendment. We would ask for 45 minutes in opposition to the amendment. The ranking member and I have had numerous requests, and we would try to parcel out that 45 minutes as best we can.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Reserving the right to object, I have just been advised that the full Committee on Appropriations is running late, and Senator BUMPERS is running a bit late. While we are checking when he thinks he will come to the floor, I ask the chairman to withdraw the UC.

I have been waiting to speak on the space station. By the time I conclude my remarks, we should know when Senator BUMPERS will be here. The delay is only because of the full committee markup.

Is that OK?

Mr. BOND. If the ranking member will yield, I was going to ask if she would speak. I was hoping that we could charge that time off of the hour. In other words, if we start now on the debate, the Senator from Maryland can speak as long as she wishes until somebody else wants to come.

Are we prepared to do a unanimous-consent?

Ms. MIKULSKI. The answer is no, not for the 5:30 vote.

Mr. BOND. Well, then, Mr. President, I will withdraw all pending unanimous-consent requests and advise my colleague that I will start my watch now, and when we get people here for a unanimous-consent, I will subtract from 1 hour the number of minutes that we have used in discussion not under the unanimous consent request.

I look forward to hearing the comments by my ranking member in support of the space station.

Ms. MIKULSKI addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I think that is a prudent course in which to proceed. The full committee markup was delayed because the committee was late going into session because of our moving ahead on military construction.

I do want to speak about the space station and began my remarks at the conclusion of the Senator from Arkansas's proposal.

But, Mr. President, before I give my remarks, what is the pending business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the Bumpers amendment No. 944.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We laid it aside. I did not know if we had come back to it.

Mr. President, I rise again this year in support of America's space program and in opposition to the Bumpers amendment, which would strike funding for the space station.

I have said this before, and I will say it again: This amendment is a choice between the future and the past. The question is, what kind of country will the United States of America be in the 21st century? Will we be one that uses technology to help people with their day-to-day lives and keep America employed in the field of manufacturing? Then, if the answer to that is yes, we must embrace science, we must embrace technology, and we must be willing to take bold risks in scientific endeavors. That is what the space station is all about.

We need to ask ourselves, will we use American ingenuity and know-how through the unique environment of space to tackle our understanding of disease or develop new technologies that can be used here at home.

Yesterday, probably one of the most distinguished Americans and one of the most distinguished U.S. Senators, Senator JOHN GLENN of Ohio, spoke eloquently about America's space program from not only the time he rocketed around the Earth making world history but talking about the kind of scientific breakthroughs that are coming out of our space program. Right this very moment, little Sojourner is moving around Mars, gathering important information. We have done it in a way that is faster, cheaper and quicker than any other space project that we have done with such a big bang in

terms of scientific information. Why are we able now to be able to move with such speed? It is because we have made such significant investments in projects like the space shuttle and the space station.

Some will argue that science carried out on the space station can really be accomplished more cost-effectively on the planet Earth. This simply is not true. The science proposed for the station cannot be accomplished on Earth at any price or at any time. Space station science requires sustained access to something called low levels of gravitational force. It is technologically impossible to create a low-gravity environment for this type of research without getting out there and being in orbit. What are these types of research? One is microgravity. The benefits of microgravity research may be numerous, including new and more pure pharmaceuticals, medical advancements, the production of new materials to use on Earth, new fire-resistant materials, new fire retardation. Just think, we might come up with a whole new concept for building supplies that can make our homes, schools, hospitals and nursing homes safe for fire.

Others will say, why not do this science on the shuttle? Why do you need to go in orbit and stay out there in orbit? I want to bring this point to their attention. The shuttle can stay up in orbit, max, about 2 weeks. We do not limit cancer researchers to 2 weeks in a lab at NIH to find a cure for a devastating disease. Why should we limit the life sciences to only 2 weeks in space? Much of the proposed research will take months, if not years, to complete.

Now, even though the astronauts might come back, the space science can continue to stay up in those racks on the space station. Remember what the space station is—it is not a station, it is a laboratory. It is not a station like a gas station, like a subway station. It is, literally, a laboratory in the sky that will have modules run by different countries. Japan, Canada, the European Space Agency, we are now in cooperation with the Russians—they will be planning part of the evacuation vehicle, and primarily the control of the station will be in the hands of an American astronaut. It is truly international and it will be truly profound.

While working on this issue, we wanted to be sure that we had adequate, maximum, robust participation from the NIH with the National Space Agency. We encouraged and then literally brought about a joint agreement between the National Institutes of Health and NASA.

Just a few years ago, Mr. Dan Goldin, the Administrator at NASA, Dr. Bernadine Healy, who was appointed by President Bush to be head of NIH at the Space Museum, signed a memorandum of understanding making sure that NIH and NASA are collaborating on life science research and also that we get maximum benefits from the space station.

One of the arguments that we hear every year is about cost. Sure, the space station does cost money. We have heard that GAO estimated that the station would cost \$90 billion. That is what the Senator from Arkansas had in his info chart this morning. However, I want to say to my colleagues and to those who have been following this all day, that number is misleading. When calculating the total cost, the GAO included a large portion of the NASA human space flight budget in its analysis. The fact is that \$51 billion of the \$94 billion is for shuttle missions that will fly, regardless of whether we have the station or not. Those shuttles have missions to do and they are going to go anyway. So that figure is misleading. The real cost of the station, which includes final development and construction over a 10-year period is about \$30 billion. No small change, but it is not \$94 billion. The remaining balance of the erroneous \$94 billion estimate is life science and microgravity research. This research will continue, in less effective form on the shuttle, with or without the space station.

Now, what is the cost to America if we do not do the station? We hear about the cost to maintain it, to build it. Well, the United States of America has already invested \$9 billion in the redesign of the space station. What does that mean? The actual work on the space station means there are 15,000 highly skilled engineering and production contract jobs directly supporting the space station. There are 35,000 contract workers and 5,000 civil servants who work on the shuttle whose major customer for the foreseeable future is the space station. And 2,000 pounds of hardware have already been built for the U.S. portion of the station.

As mentioned earlier, long-duration microgravity research and cell and developmental biology, human physiology, biotech, fluid physics, combustion science, materials science, benchmark physics, as well as an understanding of Earth-based diseases are the core of what is the research. Biotech, combustion science, material science, and then, indeed, one of the most basic of all sciences, increased knowledge of physics. There will be practical applications of what we do. We cannot list every single one of those right this minute but we do know that we will be well on our way for materials research and life science research.

Mr. President, what else do we lose? U.S. credibility with our international partners. Russia, Japan, Europe, and Canada have already invested more than half of the \$9 billion they have committed to the space station. This is a great symbol of the post-cold war era in which former arch rivals in space are now working together to build a space station for the 21st century.

U.S. competitiveness can only be maintained by continuing the long-term, cutting edge, high risk R&D that is an essential part to the space station

development. The momentum gained with the June delivery of something called Node 1 to the Kennedy Space Center marking the beginning of a stream of flight elements that will continue for the next 5 years.

And finally, we lose all of the hard work that has gone into this project since the 1980's and the opportunity to see it culminate on the first launch, now less than a year away.

Mr. President, we could argue these points all night but I will not put my friends through this discussion. The bill is already taking a substantial amount of debate time. We will soon vote on the Bumpers amendment, and I am asking every Senator to think long and hard about what this amendment means. I really urge my colleagues to reject the Bumpers amendment.

At the same time, I want to acknowledge the effort made by the Senator from Arkansas. Over the last few years when he has pushed for eliminating the space station from the budget, it has forced us to do several things, including taking a good, long hard look at the cost and making sure we were getting our money's worth, to take a good long hard research look at the research to make sure we could not do it someplace else faster, quicker and cheaper. The answer, though, is no, we must do this research if we are going to do it at all in space.

I believe the Senator from Arkansas has made, indeed, a national contribution by forcing us to relook at the space station and to justify why we do need the space station. So we thank him for his national leadership on that.

Mr. President, I really do believe that to vote to remove the space station now will really be a terrible blow to America's space station. Mr. President, I am going to urge the defeat of the Bumpers amendment and to once again be able to stay the course, complete the space station and move this country and the space station into the 21st century.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, in order to sequence these amendments, we had advised the Senator from New York that we could accommodate him. I believe he needs 5 minutes and I need 1 minute, and then we would return to the Senator from Arkansas for his comments and then proceed to a vote after 15 minutes, if we would reserve 30 minutes for this side. With that understanding let me try again on a unanimous consent.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Bumpers amendment be set aside, that the Senator from New York be recognized to offer an amendment for 5 minutes, that I be recognized for 1 minute; that on the disposition of the amendment offered by the Senator from New York, that there be 15 minutes of debate under the control of Senator BUMPERS and 30 minutes of debate under the control of myself or Senator MIKULSKI, and that no amendments be in order to the amendment offered by

Senator BUMPERS. I further ask that following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on or in relation to the Bumpers amendment.

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

The Senator from New York.

AMENDMENT NO. 952

(Purpose: To require reports by the Comptroller General on the allocation of health care resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs under the Veterans Integrated Service Network system and the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system)

Mr. D'AMATO. I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. D'AMATO], for himself, Mr. MOYNIHAN, and Mr. TORRICELLI, proposes an amendment numbered 952.

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 16, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 108. (a) Not later than 4 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the allocation of health care resources by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under the Veterans Integrated Service Network system and the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation System. The report shall address the following:

(1) The manner in which health care resources (including personnel and funds) are allocated under the Veterans Integrated Service Network system and the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system.

(2) Whether or not the allocation of health care resources under the systems takes into account the disproportionate number of veterans with special needs who reside in the northeastern United States.

(3) The effect of the allocation of health care resources under the systems on the quality of health care services provided by the Secretary to veterans who reside in the northeastern United States.

(4) The effect of the allocation of health care resources under the systems on the access to health care services provided by the Secretary to veterans who reside in the northeastern United States.

(b) Not later than 4 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall also submit to Congress a report on the effect of the reform of the eligibility of veterans for health care services under title I of Public Law 104-262 (110 Stat. 3178), and the amendments made by that title, on the quality of and access to health care provided by the Secretary to veterans who reside in the northeastern United States.

Mr. D'AMATO. First, I thank Chairman BOND and the ranking minority member, Senator MIKULSKI, for their tremendous leadership in developing this appropriations bill. I fully recognize the fiscal restraints under which the subcommittee must work to achieve our budgetary goals, and I commend them for effectively weighing

our national priorities with those constraints.

I file this amendment on behalf of my colleagues, Senator MOYNIHAN, Senator LAUTENBERG, and Senator TORRICELLI, because we have in the New York-New Jersey region a very difficult pressing problem.

I rise today on behalf of New York's 1.7 million veterans, in particular, to address the expected loss of \$180 million in veterans' health care funding over the next 3 years. What this amendment does is seek to ensure that the funding reallocation for the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation System, known as VERA, is distributed in a fair and reasonable manner. I want to respond to specific concerns with the data used by the VA to determine the allocation of health care resources to our Nation's veterans.

This amendment would require the General Accounting Office to conduct a 4-month study, examining the factors relied upon by VERA and the Veterans Integrated Service Network to distribute health care funds.

The study will focus on the following characteristics which are significant to New York, New Jersey, and to our veterans in the Northeast: First, the high number of special needs veterans residing in the Northeast States; second, the impact of eligibility reform on veterans; and third, the quality and accessibility of health care in the northeast region.

In addition, the amendment would direct the Veterans Administration to fund all VISN's at their fiscal year 1996 level until the GAO study is received by the VA-HUD appropriations subcommittee.

Mr. President, it is absolutely crucial for our veterans in New York that the factors I have just listed be considered by the VA as the VERA system continues to be implemented.

It is imperative that the results of any GAO assessment of this VERA system being incorporated as soon as it is practicable because, without such consideration, the New York VA medical system could continue to suffer grievously. The effects of such a substantial funding cut—\$180 million over 3 years—are something that we are very concerned about. For instance, a loss of VA services seems likely to have resulted in reduced levels of care. Two of New York's VA facilities, Montrose and Castlepoint, as well as others throughout the region, have suffered repeatedly. There are examples of poor care due to their ongoing merger under this system. Montrose and Castlepoint, two of the hospitals located in the Hudson Valley, have experienced skyrocketing mortality rates in both institutions. In addition, extremely poor health care and neglectful sanitary conditions have also been reported at both facilities, including: misdiagnosed infections and heart attacks; moldy suction tubes; patients lying for hours at a time in their own waste; and, in one report, a man dying for lack of a doctor as physicians

conduct a meeting without their beepers.

Question: Is this as a result of a lack of proper care? We have to find out the truth and be sure that the massive restructuring and relocation of resources is done fairly but safely.

Mr. President, we are extremely concerned with the effects of the VERA system on veterans health care in our Northeastern States. That is why I offer this amendment.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I join my friend and colleague from New York as a cosponsor of this amendment out of deep concern about the effects of the VERA initiative. Not only were the two biggest cuts in the Nation taken from the two VA service networks in New York, but New York was selected to go first, to be the guinea pig for the new program. The results are alarming. Since the merger of the hospitals at Castle Point and Montrose in the Hudson Valley, 200 jobs have been eliminated and the mortality rate is up 80 percent. The acting director of the hospitals said this increase is not significant, that there are always ups and downs in the mortality rate. That may be, but when there is so dramatic an increase during so dramatic a staff cut, we have to stop what is going on and take a careful look. This is not an isolated example. I have similar reports from Canandaigua and other VA facilities around the State.

One of the Veterans Health Administration's guiding principles with VERA is that "the decrease in overall costs shall not compromise the care given to its veteran population." In New York we have empirical evidence that this principle has been trampled underfoot. I join my colleagues in asking that the General Accounting Office begin an investigation immediately into the quality of care being given to veterans under the constraints of the VERA formula, with particular attention being given to the two New York service networks. I hope the Senators from Missouri and Maryland will support this request.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I support this amendment and am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this effort to require the General Accounting Office [GAO] to report to Congress on the effects of the VA's veterans equitable resource allocation [VERA] system. I support the effort to fund all veterans health care networks at least at the fiscal year 1996 level until this report is complete.

As a member of the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, I voted against the implementation of VERA because I believe it would unfairly shift veterans health care resources away from New Jersey at a time when our aging veterans population has an increasing need for VA health care services. New Jersey's veterans fought hard for our country and they deserve direct access to quality medical care. I share the concern of many of my Northeastern colleagues that the

VERA system may disproportionately affect our veterans access to quality health care services.

This amendment makes sense. It requires the GAO to report to Congress on the effects of VERA. It allows for a pause in the shifting of resources, which began in April, until Congress is certain that VERA will not hurt veterans in the Northeast. If the study shows that VERA will disrupt health care services to veterans in New Jersey and other Northeastern States, Congress will have the information necessary to ensure that these services are not compromised. Until Congress has this information, services should be provided at the pre-VERA levels. We should pause and assess the impact before moving forward with VERA. I hope the chairman and ranking member will include this provision, or one similar to it, in the final version of this bill.

VETERANS EQUITABLE RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROGRAM

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the amendment offered by Senator D'AMATO, which would protect funding levels for veterans' health care in New York and New Jersey. I understand that the amendment has been withdrawn, however, I appreciate the assurances given by Senators BOND and MIKULSKI that the subcommittee will give this request the serious consideration it deserves when this issue is raised in conference.

I, and my colleagues from New Jersey and New York, are very concerned about a Department of Veterans' Affairs [VA] initiative which would change the way the agency distributes health care funds to veterans' hospitals. During the next 3 years, the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation [VERA] Program is projected to divert as much as \$148 million away from our region and send it to Sun Belt States in the South and West, whose veteran populations are increasing.

I have heard from many of the 760,000 veterans in New Jersey, all of whom have legitimate fears that this funding shift will reduce the quality and availability of veterans' services in our State. Many of these individuals, who have courageously served our Nation overseas in combat, now fear becoming victims of the VA's restructuring and broken promises.

The impact of this proposal would be devastating in countless communities across New Jersey. I believe that limiting access to the VA health care system may jeopardize the well-being and the lives of many veterans. This must not be allowed to happen.

The House of Representatives has taken a strong stand against the VERA plan by including a provision in their VA spending bill which would delay the proposed funding shift for 4 months, while the General Accounting Office [GAO] examines the impact of this action on the quality of care for veterans in the Northeast. Until the GAO study is completed, the VA would fund our

region's health services at 1996 levels, which are \$12 million higher than the 1997 levels.

I strongly support this course of action, and encourage my colleagues on the subcommittee to adopt this proposal. We simply need to ensure that while the VA is providing much needed resources to certain facilities, it is not doing so at the expense of veterans in other regions. There is no harm in the GAO doing a 4 month study on whether the VA's new funding scheme is equitable. I assure New Jersey's veterans that I will continue to monitor the progress of this provision as it is debated in the conference committee, and will work to ensure that our veterans receive the health care and services that they deserve.

Again, I would like to thank Senators BOND and MIKULSKI for their consideration of this request and look forward to working with them on this and other issues of importance to the veterans' community.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, both Senators from New York have raised some important concerns regarding veterans health care in their State. Clearly, the new resource allocation system has forced some tough decisions in some networks. I believe this system is a vast improvement over previous allocation methodologies, and there are some encouraging signs that more veterans are being served in an appropriate manner. It may require some fine-tuning. That is why this committee has asked the General Accounting Office to undertake a review of the new allocation system, as I think the Senators from New York want, including what aspects of VERA may need improvement to accomplish equity and efficiency goals while maintaining quality.

The GAO report is due to be completed, I tell the Senator from New York, by September 30. As of today, they seem to be on track toward that deadline. We will work to ensure that they meet it. I think the Veterans Administration should take GAO's analysis and recommendations into consideration in making its allocations in fiscal year 1998.

In addition, a subsequent GAO report has been requested, which would look at quality of care in specific networks, including New York. Upon completion of this review, VA should incorporate any recommendations into the allocation methodology.

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator BOND for his response. I thank him on behalf of the veterans of New York, New Jersey and, indeed, the whole Northeast region. I think we are appreciative of his efforts, and he recognizes the importance of these concerns.

In particular, I am appreciative of the Senator's willingness to join me in ensuring that the GAO conducts a study which will specifically focus on the impact to the Northeast region.

I understand that the Senator will join me in urging the Veterans' Admin-

istration to adopt GAO recommendations into its VERA system immediately. And because of the Senator's willingness to ensure that the New York and New Jersey VA health care needs are recognized and that the reallocation system will be fair and equitable, on behalf of myself and my colleagues, I will withdraw this amendment at this time. I thank the Senator, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on our veterans needs.

So, Mr. President, I withdraw the amendment, and I thank my colleague, Senator BOND. I look forward to working with him, and I thank him for his responsiveness to this need.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 952) was withdrawn.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York. I assure him that we will work with him. We are now on the time allotted—

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, if I might ask my colleague to indulge me for one more moment.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator LAUTENBERG's name be added also as an original cosponsor of the amendment.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 944

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, we are now on the time allotted for debate on the Bumpers amendment on the space station. We have invited those Members who wish to speak in opposition to come forward.

I see the Senator from Arkansas on the floor. I ask if he wishes to utilize some of his time.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, this morning, in my comments I quoted Prof. Elliott Levinthal, Professor Emeritus of the Stanford School of Engineering. This afternoon he faxed me some material which I would like to share with you. "NASA's present strategic plan is based on the future human operation of Mars and its eventual colonization, with projected costs of at least many tens of billions, or perhaps more realistically, hundreds of billions." I want to thank Professor Levinthal for sending that to me because I could not agree with him more.

As I said this morning, Carl Sagan corrected me the year before last when I said he was opposed to the space station. I stood corrected. What he said was that the space station had some merit as a weigh station to go to Mars, but to justify the space station on the grounds of medical experimentation was shaky indeed. Now, I have the utmost respect for Carl Sagan. He was a much revered person around here. But I disagree with him about going to Mars.

It is not necessary to have a manned mission to Mars in order to explore

Mars. We have already discovered that. I complimented NASA this morning on sending the Mars Pathfinder rover to Mars, which is doing a tremendous amount of research that may or may not be beneficial to us. Some of we laymen who are not astronomers have a very difficult time understanding some of this. But in any event, I don't believe we ought to spend the hundreds of billions that it will take to get to Mars with a manned exploration, and I don't think the space station ought to be launched with any—what shall I say—problematical assertions that it will cure cancer, or arthritis, or heart disease, or AIDS, or anything else. Almost every thoughtful person in this country who is in the medical or physics field thinks it is an absurdity to justify this on the basis of medical research.

Professor Levinthal goes on to say: "Leaving aside colonization"—that is, of Mars—"do not be deluded by the thought that the space station is a useful step for the human scientific exploration of Mars. It is a poor investment. Exploration of Mars is a worthwhile and exciting goal, but it can be achieved most cost effectively with automated space craft."

He goes on to say: "I have been involved in consideration of the purpose of human missions since the start of the shuttle program. Committee after committee sought to find scientific, technical, military, educational, and industrial goals that could be cost-justified. None could be found . . ."

I repeat, in all of the feverish search for a justification for the space station, whether scientific, technical, military, educational, or industrial, none of them could be justified by the tremendous cost, which I said this morning will almost certainly exceed \$100 billion.

Dr. Levinthal goes on to say: "The pressures the space station are putting on Russian investment is decimating Russian support of science."

Now, Mr. President, let me review this chart one more time about the cost of the space station. Do not be deceived. Do not be deluded by the way NASA chops its figures up. They chop it up into development costs; they chop it up into launch costs; they chop it up into operations costs. Don't worry about that. Just look at this figure right here—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 5 minutes of the Senator have expired.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I yield myself 2 additional minutes.

This figure counts. It is \$94 billion and soaring. We have finally reached the point where the General Accounting Office, this morning, says that cost overruns have begun and show no sign of slackening.

What does it take in this body to get somebody's attention? This is not our money. I hear all these lamentations on the floor of the Senate about the poor taxpayer out there and trying to send his children to school and trying to make car payments and make his

house payment and how we are going to provide this magnificent \$135 billion tax cut for the poor, suffering taxpayer, while, at the same time, adding \$94 billion to his tax bill to build a space station from which we will get no benefit.

If that were just DALE BUMPERS talking, you need pay no attention. But it is every physical society of every nation who has a dime in it—the Japanese Physical Society, the Canadian Physical Society, the European Physical Society, and the American Physical Society. That is virtually 99 percent of all the physicists in the world who oppose this thing and say we ought to be spending the money on legitimate medical research. You are not going to get a cure for warts out of the space station.

Every year the National Institutes of Health send billions out in research grants.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BUMPERS. I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the Bumpers amendment. As previous chairman and present member of the Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space that provides the authorization for NASA, I would like to state my support for the space station program and the Senate appropriations bill, S. 1034. The Bumpers amendment is not new. This is an annual event here in the Senate like the first day of summer in Montana. We always know it is coming but it just never happens.

Let me start by saying that I support the missions performed by NASA. Just like the pioneers that came to Montana and settled the West, exploration in unchartered territories of space is a way to achieve our dreams of new beginnings, and visions of a better life. This is clearly illustrated by the excitement generated around the world by the Mars Pathfinder and its Sojourner rover. Every day Americans wake up to learn more information about the Mars' rocks named Scooby-Doo, Yogi, and Barnacle Bill. Record numbers of hits on the NASA website have been registered. Why? Because the Mars Pathfinder opens the door to our imagination and a new period of exploration.

This is not the only accomplishment by NASA within the past year. A rock has been found in Antarctica which excited the world with the possibility of life on the planet of Mars. The Galileo spacecraft has beamed back the intriguing photos of existence of seas on Jupiter's moon, Europa, again raising speculations of life-related chemicals. Technology is developing, like the X-33 prototype for a new generation of reusable launch vehicles, which will increase reliability and lower the costs of putting payloads in space. These endeavors inspire and expand the horizons of the pioneer spirit of all Ameri-

cans and the space station is part of that endeavor.

NASA was created by the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 to undertake civilian research, development, and flight activities in aeronautics and space. Since its creation, NASA has undertaken a wide variety of successful programs and projects. The idea of a space station is not new. In the 1970's, Skylab provided a station to carry out experiments in astronomy, space physics, materials processing, and biomedical research.

After its success, NASA began its plans to develop a permanent orbiting laboratory for conducting life science and microgravity research and to conduct human exploration of space.

Since its original authorization in 1984, the program continues to evolve to achieve its admirable goals. Today, it is a partnership between Canada, Japan, 10 European nations, as well as Russia.

I cannot stand here before you today and say that the space station is not without problems. We are all aware of these problems and I have personally addressed them over the past several years during oversight hearings. We are aware of the risks and problems resulting from the Russian participation, the increased costs, and the technical challenges in the space station design. And we will continue to have hearings to address these issues and hold NASA accountable.

NASA is also aware of these problems and are actively seeking solutions. Mr. Goldin and NASA have been successful in streamlining and restructuring NASA's operations and facilities without compromising safety, productivity, or the goals and missions of the space program. Mr. Goldin and NASA have been successful in reducing costs, increasing efficiency, and living up to his motto of a faster, better, cheaper agency. Today, NASA is doing more for less.

So today, Mr. President, we again hear the arguments for the elimination of the space station. These are arguments to eliminate our dreams. Let's retire these arguments once and for all and begin working together to overcome these difficulties to ensure our future presence in space.

Mr. President, again, I thank my friend from Missouri. Mr. President, this is an annual thing. It kind of comes like Christmas and every other holiday that comes around. We hear from those folks who really think probably this is a great waste of money. We have all stood and marveled at the expedition to Mars. It came in under budget and was done in less time. But that is 300 million miles from where we stand today. When America does not dream, or fails to reach out, then we become a stagnant people.

Right now, as we speak, there is a re-enactment of the Mormon Trail that was blazed from Omaha, NE, to the great Salt Lake Valley. Using the same mentality, we would still be driving

the same vehicles now that carried those folks westbound across Nebraska and Wyoming and into Utah.

Let me start off by saying that I support the missions performed by NASA. I am from Montana, so I don't have a big stake in what NASA does, from the standpoint of my home State of Montana. But I will tell you that when we reach out and explore the unknown—where we are going now is a little more than just a wagon train from Omaha to Salt Lake City. We have seen it clearly illustrated this week and the excitement generated around the world by the Mars Pathfinder and its Sojourner rover. Every day Americans wake up to learn more information about the Mars rocks named "Scooby-Doo" and "Yogi" and "Barnacle Bill."

More than anything else, when we talk about NASA, there is another little program that catches the eye and support of the American people called Mission Planet Earth. With our new technologies in sensing, we know more about this piece of mud that we are whipping through space on called Earth. We have done it because somebody dared to dream and somebody dared to do it.

I do not think the American people, this society should back off from the challenges of exploring space. And, yes, the space station is a part of that.

Now, I chaired the authorizing committee on science, technology and space—NASA. We changed this a little bit differently. We went out to seek partnerships, and we got some commitments, but maybe it is kind of like the chicken and the egg. Maybe we are also put to the test. Can we do it? Can we captain it? I think we can. It is American know-how, it is American technology that has put us where we are. And we do not know what the benefits are. I would guess there are probably a lot of digital wristwatches around here on a lot of people's arms that were the result of the space program—new composites. We know more about Earth. We know a lot more about everything that is not written up in newspapers every day because newspapers would rather print those negative kinds of things, I guess.

We changed the way we were going to complete the challenge of a space station because we have a lot of things to learn before we go the extra step—not back to the Moon but before we go into deeper space, and so that is why we have a little rover up there on Mars telling us a lot about that planet, the red planet.

We changed our tactics because we had one primary contractor, and now we have the hardware that is ready to go to start building this so that we may take the next step into space.

So I tell my colleagues on this floor that we have changed the whole mission of NASA, and, yes, we have brought the costs down at NASA almost a third just in the time that I have been in this Senate, so we are getting there quicker, under budget and

using less money and collecting more knowledge and technology as we move along.

Dan Goldin, who is the Administrator of NASA, has done a wonderful job in repairing—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 5 minutes have expired.

Mr. BURNS. A bureaucracy that was almost without a mission. Now we have a mission. I strongly oppose the Bumpers amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I yield myself 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I know we have had a somewhat confused schedule and there are a number of Senators who have sought recognition and would like to speak on this. I hope that their schedules will permit them to be here. In the meantime, I thought it would be helpful since we have heard various scientists quoted to give just an idea of a few of the benefits of space research.

First, in biotechnology, microgravity allows researchers to produce superior protein crystals for drug development and to grow three-dimensional tissues including cancer tumors for research and cartilage for possible transplant, and as a result people like Nobel laureate Herbert Hauptman addressed the biomedical research caucus of Congress on the value of orbital research for biomedicine and said, "I strongly support space research and the development of the space station."

Dr. T. L. Nagabhushan, Ph.D., vice president of biotechnology and development for Schering-Plough Research Institute, said

I view the space shuttle program as a stepping stone to the ultimate program that will guarantee prolonged efforts in microgravity. Ultimately, our hope is to be able to crystallize proteins in microgravity, conduct all x ray data collection experiments in space and transmit the data to Earth for processing. This can only be done in a space station.

Dr. Jeanne L. Becker, assistant professor, department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of South Florida, said

The application of microgravity technology toward the development of tissue models has far-reaching potential for advancing cancer research. Like many of the new and innovative technologies, including gene therapy and immune-based treatment, space-based research must be continued and expanded in order to apply the benefits of this technology to the rapidly advancing area of health sciences.

Dr. Milburn Jessup, Deaconess Hospital, Harvard Medical School, said

The space program offers a chance to improve our models of cancer and to develop new drugs and treatment as well as to gain knowledge about how cancer spreads. The space program has provided a breakthrough in tools for cancer research. We feel this is the tip of the iceberg of scientific discovery for us and the beginning of a new era in the care of the cancer patient.

Mr. President, I could go on and on. We have stacks and stacks of testi-

mony from scientists, scientific organizations, physicians, medical researchers, health care researchers, people who do research in many areas of microgravity and physics and other related areas of science. We could bring all of those statements in.

I cite these just as a few specific examples of why the scientific community, and the vast majority of the scientific community, believes that the space station and space research is vitally important.

I conclude by referring to biomedical research, saying space research provides unique insights into how the heart and lungs function; the growth and maintenance of muscle and bone; perception cognition, and balance, and the regulation of the body's many systems in the field of regulatory physiology.

That is why the American Medical Association has adopted a resolution in support of the international space station.

The AMA supports the continuation of NASA and other programs for conducting medical research and other research with potential health care benefits on manned space flights, including the continued development and subsequent operation of the international space station.

I thought I would conclude my remarks, Madam President, with a quote from Dr. Michael DeBakey, chancellor and chairman of the department of surgery, Baylor College of Medicine, who said,

The space station is not a luxury any more than a medical research center at Baylor College of Medicine is a luxury.

He said also,

Present technology on the shuttle allows for stays in space of only about 2 weeks. We do not limit medical researchers to only a few hours in the laboratory and expect cures for cancer. We need much longer missions in space, in months to years, to obtain research results that may lead to the development of new knowledge and breakthroughs.

Mr. President, these are just a few of the comments that the scientific community has made in support of the space station.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BUMPERS. Madam President, how much time is remaining for each side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SNOWE). The Senator from Arkansas has 8 minutes and the Senator from Missouri has 25 minutes.

Mr. BUMPERS. Will the Senator from Missouri entertain the idea of possibly yielding back some time and I will, too, and maybe we can expedite this? Does the Senator have any other opponents?

Mr. BOND. Madam President, we have had a number of Senators who were most anxious to speak on this. We could not get them in time. I know that Senator HUTCHISON, Senator GRAMM, Senator SESSIONS, Senator DODD, and Senator GLENN had all expressed an interest. We have tried to

send out appeals to them. We hope that, if they are anxious to speak, they will be here before 5:30. But I say at 5:30 I will be prepared to yield back any time remaining on our side if the Senators have been unable to change their schedules.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I wish to advise the Senator from Missouri that Senator GLENN, because of other responsibilities, will not be speaking. His statement yesterday was so eloquent he would like it to stand there as a rebuttal to the amendment of the Senator from Arkansas. We are checking now to see if the Senator from Connecticut wishes to speak and will so advise the chairman.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Madam President, I yield myself 5 minutes.

At this stage of the debate on these things it is always largely repetitious but some things are worth repeating. It does not change any votes sometimes, but it is therapeutic to me to say things more than once and then people who ignore it in my opinion do so at their own risk. But as I said this morning, it is a tragedy that the space station is what we call a freebie. You can go ahead and vote for this \$100 billion boondoggle which will never provide any cures for any disease, will probably never even be used as a way station to Mars, that is opposed by every physicist in the world and not because it is totally worthless but because the money could be so much more effectively spent on other things.

I pointed out this morning, and it is worth pointing out again, the cost of one launch of the space shuttle could pay to allow the National Institutes of Health to approve one out of every three applications for medical research instead of one out of four, just one launch, and there are 83 such launches to support the space station program. And every one of them is calculated to occur within a 5-minute window without a hitch.

It is going to cost \$94 billion in today's dollars and you assume that every one of those 83 to 90 launches is going to be split perfect. You think about it. Think about the enormity of such a promise.

Dan Goldin testified before the Subcommittee of Commerce on Science and Technology:

It is certain that the program does not have adequate reserves built into the total development estimate to address Russian contingencies, which I will address later. There is also the issue of the impact the Russian delay has had in pushing completion of the assembly sequence beyond 2002.

You bet, October 2003 to be precise, a \$2 billion cost overrun because Russia cannot come up with the money to build a service module.

And he goes on to say,

Clearly, the drawn out timeframe for development/assembly will increase program

costs. The exact extent of this cost is being worked.

Here is how they have worked it. Here is the way NASA has worked it. Here are the promises that have been made.

Here is what NASA said on February 17, 1994:

Russian participation reduces cost by \$2 billion and allows science utilization significantly earlier than with the alpha station.

Broken promise.

Another promise. NASA said the first element launch would be launched in November 1997 instead of September, 1998.

The reality. The first element launch is now scheduled for June, 1998. Broken promise No. 2.

The space station laboratory will be available in February 1998. Reality: May, 1999. Broken promise No. 3.

Promise. The space station will be completed in June, 2002. Reality: Now October, 2003. Broken promise No. 4.

Russia's participation will save the United States taxpayers \$2 billion. Now we are going to have to come up with \$2 billion. Broken promise No. 5.

Promise: Extravehicular activity, space walking, will be, in 1993, 350 hours they said; in 1994 it had gone up to 434 hours; in 1996 it went up to 1,104 hours; in 1997, 1,519 hours—a 500 percent increase. Broken promise No. 6.

Those are the promises we have gotten from NASA, and the cost is just now beginning to soar. They have just taken \$400 million out of the science program. There won't be any money left to do a scientific experiment. They took \$400 million out of science to make up some of the shortfalls.

They took \$200 million out of the shuttle program and put it into the space program. The cost overruns are soaring, and GAO said this morning, in a report released this morning: No letup in sight.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas has 5 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I thank the chairman and ranking member of this important subcommittee, because they have seen, early on, the importance and the benefits, for our present society and our future children and grandchildren, of space research continuing to move forward to find how we can live better through experimentation in space. That is going to help all of us now and in the future. They have seen this and I am so pleased that the Senate has continued to ratify its faith in space.

I cannot imagine that anyone in the past few weeks who has seen the Pathfinder exploring Mars, the pictures that are being taken by Pathfinder on Mars that show it to look about like Arizona—I cannot imagine that anyone

would not be so excited about what we are going to be able to learn from this kind of continued exploration. So I think now, of all times, people who are big thinkers, who have a vision for our country, would not want to stop our efforts to explore in space.

We have talked about the importance of the health benefits that we have in the microgravity conditions in the space station before. Senator MIKULSKI and I have worked on osteoporosis and breast cancer, trying to increase the funding. You cannot, no matter what you do, no matter how much technology you have—you cannot reproduce the gravity conditions that are in space, on Earth. You cannot do it. Yet we know that those microgravity conditions will allow us to watch the development of breast cancer cells and of osteoporosis in this weightlessness and perhaps find the cure for breast cancer. We can learn how to combat osteoporosis in the older, especially women, but also men. In fact, NASA research already has led to these developments in health.

The cool suit for Apollo missions now helps improve the quality of life of patients with multiple sclerosis. NASA technology has produced a pacemaker that can be programmed from outside the body. NASA has developed instruments to measure bone loss and bone density without penetrating the skin. NASA research has led to an implant for diabetes that is only 3 inches across. It provides more precise control of blood sugar levels and frees diabetics from the burden of daily insulin injections.

I was reading about Professor James Langer's discoveries. He is from the University of California at Santa Barbara. He wrote in *Physics Today* that, "Metallurgists have long sought to predict and control alloy microstructures." This may seem a little off the wall, but in fact it is very important when they are trying to find the very best substance with which to make products. He found that this is best done in the microgravity conditions because gravity affects the way things can solidify.

So you take all these scientific things and boil them down to: How does it make my life better? In fact, it does make our life better. It does make our health better. It does give patients who have multiple sclerosis or osteoporosis a better chance to have a good quality of life. I reject the idea that we would walk away from the possibilities for the future for better health and better quality of life, but also the products that will be formed from the scientific developments that we make with the space station. Once we have the research, then we take that technology and we make the products. And that is what has kept our economy burgeoning and growing and able to accept the new, young people who come into it after they graduate from high school and college; accept the new people who come to our country, looking for the American dream.

Part of the American dream is the commitment to research. It is the commitment to the future. An important part of that is space and the space station. That is why it is so important that we keep this commitment to space research, to NASA, to the space station. And the Senate has done that. In the 4 years that I have been in the U.S. Senate, I have been very proud of the big thinkers and their ability to see the difference between shutting off our future and our possibilities and saying we can save a small amount here, not thinking that for every \$1 we invest we get a \$2 return in our productivity and in our gross national product.

I respect the Senator from Arkansas. I know he believes sincerely that this is a waste of taxpayer dollars. I wish, before he leaves the Senate, that he would come around to seeing the benefits of space research so maybe in his last year here he would say: You know what? I think there is a future, it is worth keeping, that it will make life better for our children, that it will provide scientific jobs for our children, that it will keep the technology and the research and the innovations in America, along with our international partners. Because this is not just people who write in *Physics Today*. This is quality of life for elderly people who have osteoporosis. This is for the prevention of breast cancer. This is for the scientific base that has made America what it is today.

To walk away from that would be un-American and it would be unthinkable. So I hope our colleagues will give us the resounding vote that we have had in the past. I hope they will resolutely stand for the future, for our children and our grandchildren, and for a great America for years to come.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Texas. She has long been, not only an advocate, but very knowledgeable and a strong supporter of the space station. She has given us many good reasons why we should support the space station.

I am pleased, now, to yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Utah.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, we are all going to miss the Senator from Arkansas. He is a good friend, and I use that in the honest term, rather than the kind of puffery that often goes on around here. He takes the floor twice a year to espouse things with which I disagree. First, he wants to do things to the mining law that I don't want to do. And then he wants to kill the space station in a way that I don't want it killed. So I vote against him on both of these occasions, but I look forward to these because he keeps us honest with his concerns. He has not yet convinced me to back away from my commitment to the space station, but I pay tribute to his tenacity and to his integrity.

I have answered at some length in previous debates. I will not take the time to do that now. I simply repeat, again, my commitment to the idea of venturing into the unknown even when it seems expensive and sometimes foolish, because we are never quite sure what we are going to find. But, almost always, it comes back to benefit us.

As I stand here I am reminded of the quote, I can't give it to you exactly, of the historian who said: History is a chancy thing. America was discovered by someone who was heading for somewhere else, thought he had arrived someplace other than he had, and was named after a man who never came here.

History is like that, chancy. We are never quite sure what is going to happen to us, but great things happen to us when we explore. We are launched on this exploration now. We are far enough along that it makes sense for us to continue. Who knows what we will find? I will not pretend to know that we will find the cure for cancer or anything else when we get out there. We will surprise ourselves. It will be chancy. But that has been our history; that has been our destiny. I, for one, want to continue it in this program.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Utah. To the notes he added from history, we might add that he, Christopher Columbus, was a very modern traveler. He did it all with borrowed money. I think that is one element that should be added.

We are awaiting the arrival of Senator GRAMM of Texas, who is, I think, going to be the last speaker on this side. For the information of my colleagues, how many minutes are remaining for debate on this measure?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 12 minutes and 12 seconds, and the Senator from Arkansas has 3 minutes.

Mr. BOND. I expect perhaps within 10 minutes we would be ready, or as soon as Senator GRAMM has had the opportunity to speak, we would be ready to yield back the remainder of our time.

I so inform the Senate.

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, if I might before the Senator from Texas comes up, I have another historical allusion I would like to share.

Mr. BOND. I am delighted to yield 3 minutes for historical allusions from the Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. I thank the Senator from Missouri.

It has been pointed out to me in the study of history that the nation that was the most powerful, the most progressive, that had, in modern terms, superpower status some centuries ago, was the nation of China. One of the things the Chinese did was send their explorers around the world. There were Chinese ships that were exploring as far away as the coast of Africa, I am told.

Then the Chinese Government decided that that was too expensive, that

it was too chancy, that there would be no guarantee that they would learn anything or find anything or profit in any way and, as a cost-cutting measure, the Chinese cut back on their exploration and virtually left the field open to the Europeans. There was very little contact, of course, between the Europeans and the Chinese in that period, but the field was left open in a way that we can look back on in history and say: What might have happened if the Chinese had maintained their exploring activities and maintained their willingness to go into the future? What might have happened, had they not taken those cost-cutting measures? The history of the world would be very, very different.

It was the Europeans who went out on their exploration after the Chinese cut back. I don't want to see the Americans cut back on their adventure and their exploration, and then have someone else step into the breach. Because I am convinced that if we cut back on our exploration of space, someone else will step up to it. Who knows what the implications could be, hundreds of years from now?

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Madam President, I thank our distinguished chairman for yielding. I thank him for the leadership in this very difficult job. Having served on this subcommittee, I know how difficult it is, how many important issues are under his jurisdiction, and how difficult politically they are. So I want to begin by saying thank you to Senator BOND for the great job he has done.

Senator BUMPERS, every year, proposes that we kill the space station and every year we have a protracted debate on it. I think, now, Members understand the issue enough that the lines are pretty well drawn.

So, today, I am not going to go into a lengthy speech. I know Senator BUMPERS and I know the quality of his work, so I know he has made the best case he can make for his position.

I would just like to remind my colleagues that in 1965, we were investing 5.7 cents out of every dollar spent by the Federal Government in science and technology in the future. We were investing 5.7 cents out of every dollar we spent in Washington by investing in the next generation, in investing in the science and the technology to build the scientific base of the country to give us the ability to construct new tools that were more effective and sharper than tools used by people in other parts of the world. We were able to develop new technology and new products that have made us the envy of the world and have allowed us to maintain the highest living standards on Earth.

Whereas we were investing 5.7 cents out of every dollar in the Federal budg-

et in nondefense R&D in 1965, we are now investing roughly 1.9 cents out of every dollar spent by the Federal Government in science and technology in the future. We have dramatically reduced the investment we are making in the future, and, basically, what we have done is succumbed to the siren song of investing more and more money in the next election, in programs that have a big political constituency, in programs that yield a return before the voter goes to vote in even numbered years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, and we have systematically, since 1965, reduced the investment that we are making in the future, investment that we are making in the next generation.

This ultimately comes down to a debate between investing in the next election and investing in the next generation. While I believe we have to run the space program efficiently, we have had dramatic reductions in its growth. I think when science investment is down to 1.9 percent of the nondefense R&D Federal budget, down from 5.7 percent in 1965, that we need to be alarmed about it.

I have introduced legislation to set up a program within our existing budget to double expenditures on science and technology, to set out a 10-year goal of doubling the budget of the National Institutes of Health, doubling the budget for science and technology, because I believe that it is critical to the country's future.

Let me also say that I take a back seat to no one in controlling spending, but this is about priorities. What programs do we spend the money we spend on? I say invest it in the next generation, not in the next election, and defeat the Bumpers amendment as we have done in the past. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. Who yields time?

Mr. BOND. Madam President, we are about to yield back time. I turn to the distinguished sponsor of the amendment.

Mr. BUMPERS. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas has 3 minutes, and the Senator from Missouri has 5 minutes.

Mr. BOND. I will be happy to accommodate the Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Madam President, I will use my 3 minutes, and we will get this show on the road.

Let me just say, in the 6 years I have stood at this position saying we ought to cancel the space station, for all the reasons I enumerated all day long, one of the opponents' arguments consistently has been that we are going to cure breast cancer, prostate cancer, cervical cancer, warts, ingrown toenails, psoriasis, you name it. It reminds me of that old Huey Long story about the medicine doctor coming

through Louisiana. He was selling Low Poplarhirum and High Poplarlorum.

"What's the difference?" someone asked him.

He said, "Well, the High Poplarlorum will cure anything from the waist up, and Low Poplarhirum will cure anything from the waist down."

They said, "Where do you get it?"

He said, "We get it from the Poplar tree."

"How do you get a medicine out of one tree that cures everything from the waist up and the waist down?"

He says, "Well, we take sap from the bottom half of the tree, that is Low Poplarhirum, and we take sap from the top of the tree, and that is High Poplarlorum, and that's the way it works."

Low Poplarhirum and High Poplarlorum reminds me of the debate going on about the space station today. It is going to cure everything under the shining Sun and it isn't going to cure anything. I will eat my hat—and I wish I was going to be in the Senate to do it—if it ever cures anything. That claim is not anything in the world but a hoax designed to perpetuate a \$100 billion expenditure that if it were put into real research to cure breast cancer, to cure cervical cancer, to cure prostate cancer, it might get you something. It is going to get you nothing by putting \$100 million into the space station.

Read the GAO report I received this morning. I am not talking about the grandiose promise Ronald Reagan made in 1984 about how we are going to do it all for \$8 billion. We have already thrown \$11 billion away on the first space station before we abandoned it, and now we are headed for another \$80 billion, \$85 billion, and we are not going to cure anything. This project has no purpose in the world but to keep people working, to keep the aerospace and defense contractors all over the country working, and to explore what?

The Russians have been up there 20 years. I, again, invite anybody in this body to tell me what the Russians have cured, what they have developed in 20 years of having space stations. They have had seven space stations; there is nothing new about that. A space station is a mechanical thing; it is not scientific. The Russians have been up there 20 years. I challenge anybody to tell me one single thing from a medical standpoint that they have gotten out of it. I can tell you the answer is nothing.

We are going to continue pouring money down this just like we did the Clinch River breeder reactor, just like we did the super collider, until we finally woke up. The GAO issued a wake-up call this morning. For God's sakes, I say to Senators, why don't you listen to it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I am sorry to hear the time has expired, because I was really getting into listen-

ing to my colleague from Arkansas. He makes me feel like I used to feel when the summer carnival came to town and I lived in and I listened to people who were smooth talkers from Arkansas and elsewhere. I wound up giving them the 20, 30 cents I had saved all summer long. They are very, very compelling.

In this instance, it is not my position, it is the position of the distinguished scientists, such as the ones whose comments and quotes I have read into the RECORD that outline specifically what the benefits of the space station and space exploration have been and will be.

While we respect the very powerful arguments made by the Senator from Arkansas, I now move to table the amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to lay on the table the amendment of the Senator from Arkansas. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 193 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Akaka	Feinstein	Mack
Allard	Ford	McCain
Bennett	Frist	McConnell
Biden	Glenn	Mikulski
Bingaman	Gorton	Moseley-Braun
Bond	Graham	Murkowski
Boxer	Gramm	Murray
Breaux	Grams	Nickles
Brownback	Grassley	Reid
Burns	Gregg	Robb
Campbell	Hagel	Roberts
Cleland	Hatch	Rockefeller
Coats	Helms	Roth
Cochran	Hutchison	Santorum
Coverdell	Inhofe	Sarbanes
Craig	Inouye	Sessions
D'Amato	Kempthorne	Shelby
Daschle	Kerrey	Smith (NH)
DeWine	Kerry	Smith (OR)
Dodd	Kyl	Stevens
Domenici	Landrieu	Thompson
Enzi	Lieberman	Thurmond
Faircloth	Lott	Torricelli

NAYS—31

Abraham	Feingold	Lugar
Ashcroft	Harkin	Moynihan
Baucus	Hollings	Reed
Bryan	Hutchinson	Snowe
Bumpers	Jeffords	Specter
Byrd	Johnson	Thomas
Chafee	Kennedy	Warner
Collins	Kohl	Wellstone
Conrad	Lautenberg	Wyden
Dorgan	Leahy	
Durbin	Levin	

The motion to lay on the table the amendment (No. 944) was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay it on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BYRD. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOND. With the concurrence of the majority leader and the minority leader, I think we are prepared to have one more vote on an amendment to be offered by Senator BUMPERS. I believe other amendments pending can be resolved without a vote, so we hope to be able to have the vote on the amendment and start the vote for final passage prior to 7 o'clock.

I ask unanimous consent the debate on an amendment to be offered by the Senator from Arkansas be 20 minutes, equally divided in the usual form.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 953

(Purpose: To cap the cost of the Space Station)

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and I ask unanimous consent that no second-degree amendments be in order.

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

The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. BUMPERS] proposes an amendment numbered 953.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill, insert the following new sections.

SEC. XXX. ANNUAL REPORT ON LIFE CYCLE COSTS AND SPACE LAUNCH REQUIREMENTS.

(a) For each of the fiscal years 1999 through 2013, the Administrator, along with the President's submission to the Congress of the annual budget request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall submit a report that contains,

(1) a life cycle capital development and operations plan with a year-by-estimate of the United States' share of the projected expenses for development, construction, operation, enhancement, and decommissioning and disassembly of the Space Station;

(2) an updated space launch manifest for the Space Station program and the estimated marginal and average launch costs for the Space Station program for the fiscal year involved and all succeeding fiscal years.

SEC. XXX. FUNDING CAPS.

(a) The President's cumulative budget submissions for Space Station capital development and operations for the fiscal year 1994 through the fiscal year during which the Space Station achieves full operational capability may not exceed \$17,400,000,000, exclusive of launch costs.

(b) After achieving full operational capability and continuing through its decommissioning, the President's annual budget submission to Congress for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall contain an amount for the operation of, and any enhancement to, the Space Station which shall in no case exceed \$1,300,000,000 for that fiscal year, exclusive of launch costs.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section

(1) the capital development program of the Space Station includes, but is not limited to, the research and development activities associated with the space and ground systems and collateral equipment of the Space Station, and all direct expenses for space flight, control, data communications, assembly and operations planning, construction of facilities, training, development of science equipment and payloads, and research and program management activities associated with the construction and operations of the Space Station and its supporting elements and services until the facility is equipped and powered as planned, and declared fully operational.

(2) operation of the Space Station includes, but is not limited to, all direct research and development; space flight, control and data communications; construction of facilities; training; development of science equipment and payloads; scientific experiments; and research and program management activities associated with the operations of the Space Station; and the U.S.-Russia cooperative MIR program.

(3) enhancement of the Space Station includes all direct research and development; space flight, control and data communications; construction of facilities; and research and program management activities associated with the acquisition of additional Space Station elements and ground support facilities.

(4) direct expenses include, but are not limited to, the marginal costs of transportation and tracking and data services, launch facilities, payload processing facilities, simulator facilities, and all other enabling facilities including their collateral equipment, and all laboratory and technical services provided by NASA Centers to support space station development and scientific research.

(5) full operation capability means the facility is fully assembled on-orbit with the power, configuration and capabilities described in the system design review of March 24, 1994.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I will make this brief. I know everyone wants to get out of here, and I want to accommodate the membership.

Last week, the Armed Services Committee accepted an amendment that capped the costs on the F-22 fighter plane. They, I think, correctly decided that the costs of the F-22 could very well go way beyond anything intended by the Congress. So, Mr. President, they accepted a cap on the F-22 fighter plane.

All I am trying to do on this is do the same thing on the space station. I am using NASA's figures. These are not my figures. These are the figures that NASA says they can build the space station for and operate it. The amendment, as I say, is right where they say it is, but here is the reason I am doing this. The General Accounting Office says that since last year, the risk to the space station's costs in schedule have, in fact, increased. GAO goes on to say the station's financial reserves have also deteriorated significantly.

Now, I think the people in this body who strongly favor the space station in good conscience and as a duty to their constituents and their own conscience ought to support saying at some point there ought to be some kind of a limit

on how much we are willing to spend. I am using the figures that NASA has themselves put out: \$17.4 billion to build it, \$1.3 billion a year to operate it. The cap does not extend to a launch cost, only to the building and deployment and to the operating of it.

That seems like a simple, straightforward amendment to me, Mr. President.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I just appreciate the effort the Senator from Arkansas is making to ensure that the spending on this widely supported and strongly endorsed program is kept under control, but the space station is already operating under administrative caps. I understand the authorizing committee is examining the potential for legislated caps. I think this is an issue appropriately to be referred to the authorizers. It deserves careful consideration, not brought forward here in the last moment on an appropriations bill debate.

I just say, Mr. President, space station is a research and development project. It has a lot of uncertainties but tremendous promise. It is rocket science. We are dealing with rocket science. We should not lock NASA in stone with caps that are pulled out of thin air here at the last minute in the appropriations process.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the Bumpers amendment.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I, too, rise in opposition to the Bumpers amendment. Though well-intentioned, it is not necessary and could inadvertently, by placing a cap, lead to real concern in the area of safety.

First, we do not want to tie the hands of the NASA administrator. Second, since fiscal year 1994, the station has been subject to funding limitations, a \$2.1 billion annual funding and a \$17.4 billion overall funding through the completion of the assembly. Yes, these limitations are not legislatively mandated; they have been administratively carried out.

There are many references to these specific limitations to the space station budget and congressional proceedings. For example, the \$17.4 billion total cap through the completion of the assembly. Recent reports indicate that NASA is expected to build the station within these limits. We should not legislate a cap. In good faith, NASA continues to meet these goals. Any additional money sought is for unforeseen problems either associated with the Russian service module or where we might now identify a certain series of safety concerns. We are learning lessons from Mir.

I don't want to tie the hands of NASA or threaten the lives of astronauts. I really encourage our colleagues to vote no on Bumpers and await the wise counsel of the authorizing committee on this issue.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BUMPERS. I hardly know what else to say about this. The figures I am

using are the figures that NASA says they can build and operate it for. Now, it is obvious from the GAO report that came out this morning that these costs are beginning to get out of control. There is a shifting from one account to another. There is even shifting from non-space station programs to space station programs.

All I am trying to do is to say, let's get it under control. There is not anything, frankly, written in stone about a cost cap amendment. Next year, if NASA comes in and says we are down \$1 billion, we will certainly give it to them, if I am any judge of what is going to happen around here in the future with the space station.

But here is what the GAO report said this morning, Mr. President:

NASA's actions to reinforce its financial reserves and keep the program within its funding limitations has in some cases involved redefining a portion of the program subject to the limitations. Such actions make the value of the current limitations as a funding control mechanism questionable. Therefore, we proposed that the NASA administrator, with the concurrence of the Office of Management and Budget, direct the space station to discontinue the use of the current funding limitations.

And they go ahead to say at the end of the review:

Assuming that Congress decides to continue the space station program and wants to replace the current funding limitations, it should consider, after consultation with NASA, reestablishment in light of the current circumstances.

Now, the truth of the matter is, this program is heading headlong out of control. There are very few people in this body that do not know that, that do not understand that, and I am offering this amendment simply because I am saying, if you are going to build a space station, for Pete's sake let's put some kind of a limitation on it.

Mr. President, the Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, who chairs the Commerce Committee, tells me that he is working with NASA and he wants to work with me on putting a cap on this. One of the problems I have and worry about is, are we simply going to put some language in—and I think Senator MCCAIN shares my concern about the cost of this program. I certainly would welcome the opportunity to work with him, but I don't want a cap, and I know Senator MCCAIN doesn't want a cap that has all kinds of escape mechanisms in it so the costs can continue to skyrocket and we can continue building this big boondoggle. My whole purpose is to say to my colleagues who believe in the space station—which I do not—that I know they share my concern about these costs that GAO says are sliding out of control.

Mr. President, I withdraw my amendment.

The amendment (No. 953) was withdrawn.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, it is with deep gratitude that I express my appreciation to the Senator from Arkansas. I believe he has another amendment

and I now feel a wonderful sense that we will be willing to accept it if he wishes to proceed with that.

Ms. MIKULSKI. If the Senator from Arkansas would just allow a kudos comment. I thank the Senator for withdrawing his amendment, though I know that he is in no way retreating from his position. We acknowledge that position and we look forward to hearing both from him and the distinguished chairman of the Commerce Committee on his advice in this matter. Thanks again.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the Bumper amendment to place a cap on the space station. I oppose the idea of a price cap at this time given the recent changes to the space station program surrounding the prime contractor's performance and the instability of Russian participation.

I have asked the General Accounting Office [GAO] to update their previous life-cycle cost estimate on the space station. Once this cost estimate is completed, I intend to introduce a price cap on the station. It is my hope that a price cap at that time will reflect a more accurate assessment of the space station total life-cycle costs.

I am pleased that my colleague from Arkansas has withdrawn his amendment.

I look forward to investigating these issues further after the GAO study I requested is completed and after the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee holds hearings and further consultation with interested parties including NASA.

AMENDMENT NO. 954

(Purpose: To earmark funds for a National Research Council report on the Space Station program)

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. BUMPERS] proposes an amendment numbered 954.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place in the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. . Of the funds provided to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in this bill, the Administrator shall by November 1, 1998, make available no less than \$400,000 for a study by the National Research Council, with an interim report to be completed by June 1, 1998, that evaluates, in terms of the potential impact on the Space Station's assembly schedule, budget, and capabilities, the engineering challenges posed by extravehicular activity (EVA) requirements, U.S. and non-U.S. space launch requirements, the potential need to upgrade or replace equipment and components after assembly complete, and the requirement to de-commission and disassemble the facility.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, this simply requires NASA to spend up to

\$400,000 of its unobligated funds for the National Research Council to do a study between now and the summer of 1998 on any engineering problems that may seem insurmountable in building and deploying the space station.

I think both floor managers have looked this over and have agreed to it. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 954) was agreed to.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BOND. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, have the floor managers had an opportunity to look over the visa waiver for Veterans' Administration doctors?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, we have had conversation with the authorizing committees and, from our standpoint, I have found no objection from the committees of jurisdiction. This one is well outside the scope of our normal activities. So I am awaiting any expression of concern. We have not had any concern from the committees who have jurisdiction over immigration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I know that the VA often has very special circumstances where doctors, perhaps from other countries, or graduates from international medical schools, are present in our VA hospitals to help with either special assignments or special chores.

From what I can understand, there was an error in last year's immigration bill that really shackled VA from the flexibility it had in this area. From what I understand, the Bumpers amendment is a benign amendment. It does not create a new classification. It does not create a new entitlement to either come to this country or stay in this country. It just reaffirms kind of what was once a usual and customary practice by the VA. So I don't anticipate an objection.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, let me just thank the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Missouri. Let me add this caveat which might help them sleep better. A veterans' hospital in Little Rock told me they have five doctors they are going to lose. I am really offering this on their behalf. This is sort of a critical situation where these doctors are going to be forced to leave and go home.

All this amendment says is that, in the future, the VA—not the doctor—could request a waiver of the visa requirement that they return home for 2 years before they can come back. That seems like a fairly laudable thing when you consider the medical shortages most VA hospitals experience. If you find when you get to the conference committee somebody objects because it may be a turf fight of some kind, I will

understand that. I hope that doesn't happen. But I appreciate the accommodation you have given.

AMENDMENT NO. 955

(Purpose: To restore the authority of the Veterans' Administration to request waivers of the home residency requirement for doctors employed at VA hospitals on J-1 visas)

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. BUMPERS] proposes an amendment numbered 955.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the appropriate place, add the following new section: SEC. . Section 214(j)(1)(D) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(j)(1)(D)) (as added by section 220 of the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 and redesignated as subsection (j) by section 671(a)(3)(A) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", except that, in the case of a request by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the alien shall not be required to practice medicine in a geographic area designated by the Secretary."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 955) was agreed to.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BOND. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 6:40 p.m. the Senate proceed to H.R. 2158, the House companion bill, all after the enacting clause be stricken, the text of S. 1034 be inserted, H.R. 2158 be read for the third time, and a vote occur on passage, all without further action or debate.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 956 THROUGH 960, EN BLOC

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I send a group of amendments to the desk, en bloc, and ask for their immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri [Mr. BOND] proposes amendments numbered 956 through 960, en bloc.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 956

(Purpose: To enable the State of Florida to use prior EPA Title II funds for a grant for wastewater treatment, and for other purposes)

On page 63, lines 4 and 5, strike "allocated to the purposes of the Safe Drinking Water Act" and insert "allocated for the purposes of the Safe Drinking Water Act and title VI of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, respectively."

On page 63, line 18, before the period, add the following proviso: "Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator is authorized to make a grant of \$4,326,000 under Title II of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended, from funds appropriated in prior years under section 205 of the Act for the State of Florida and available due to deobligation, to the appropriate instrumentality for wastewater treatment works in Monroe County, Florida"

On page 64, line 18, before the period, add the following proviso: "Provided, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds other than those appropriated under this heading, shall be used for or by the Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Environmental Quality".

On page 65, line 13, after the semi-colon, insert "or", and on line 17 strike "; or beaches".

AMENDMENT NO. 957

(Purpose: To limit the use of locality pay differential that would provide a pay increase to an employee transferred as a result of sexual harassment)

At the appropriate place, insert:

None of the funds made available by Title I of this Act may be used to provide a locality payment differential which would have the effect of causing a pay increase to any employee that was removed as a Director of a VA Hospital and transferred to another hospital as a result of the Inspector General's conclusion that the employee engaged in verbal sexual harassment and abusive behavior toward female employees.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I am pleased to offer this amendment that calls for a halt to all locality pay increases for all employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs that have been transferred due to their perpetration of sexual harassment. Let me explain why this amendment is necessary.

Over a year ago to date, the Veterans Department undertook an investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment, misconduct, and unprofessional behavior on the part of Jerome Calhoun, who was Director of the VA Medical Center in Fayetteville, NC.

In September 1996, the Office of the Inspector General of the Veterans Department issued a report confirming the allegations of sexual harassment, as well as a pattern of inappropriate and abusive behavior toward Department employees.

In most organizations today this kind of behavior would not be tolerated. Jerome Calhoun would have been fired. Unfortunately, this is not the way things work at the Veterans Department. At the Veterans Department this kind of deplorable behavior gets you a comfortable settlement.

Here are the facts: For his intolerable behavior, Mr. Calhoun was given a

pay raise, bringing his already generous salary to \$106,000. He was transferred to sunny Bay Pines, FL, a locale of his own choosing, and he was given the position of special assistant which is standard Government lingo for having no specific responsibilities. Quite frankly, I look at this settlement and I ask myself, where is the punishment? In the private sector this would be considered a promotion.

Mr. President, on behalf of the 200,000 employees of the Veterans Department, I ask this body to do what Department officials have neglected. Jerome Calhoun must not be allowed make such an incredible mockery of the system.

AMENDMENT NO. 958

On page 51 after line 11, insert the following new section:

SEC. 216. INDIAN HOUSING REFORM.

Upon a finding by the Secretary that any person has substantially, significantly, or materially violated the requirements of any activity under the Native American Housing Block Grants Program under title I of the Native American Self-Determination Act of 1996 or any associated activity under the jurisdiction of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary shall bar that person from any such participation in programs under that title thereafter and shall require reimbursement for any losses or costs associated with these violations.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I am offering an amendment today to correct an egregious problem at the Department of Housing and Urban Development and on tribal lands across the Nation that came to light last December. As many of my colleagues know, the Seattle Times broke an unbelievable story of greed, deception, and mismanagement in the tribal housing program shortly before the 105th Congress convened.

The Seattle Times reported that funding intended to build housing for low-income native Americans on the Tulalip Reservation in my State, went instead to construct a 5,300 square foot \$400,000 home. The recipients of this taxpayer-funded home were not low-income, but instead earned a combined yearly income of \$92,319 as executive director of the tribe's housing authority and contracting officer for the authority. I am confident my colleagues will agree that this abuse of HUD funding is outrageous and should be punished severely.

Unfortunately, the Tulalip house was not the only problem Seattle Times reporters found in their 6-month investigation of tribal housing programs. Instead, they turned up numerous and repeated examples of cheating, abuse, and mismanagement in native American housing programs across the United States.

In Red Rock, OK, Troy Warrior and his family of the Otoe-Missouria Indian tribe were excited at the prospect of moving into a new home. They would finally be able to afford their own home with help from HUD financing. Only a few days before the family was scheduled to move into the modest home, they were told that leaders of

the tribal housing authority would get the house instead. Twenty other low-income families in the tribe faced the same dilemma. The tribal housing leaders eliminated the requirement that recipients of the homes pay for them, in effect giving themselves free houses at the expense of American taxpayers while those truly in need of the housing were left to fend for themselves.

Jimmy Viarrial, chairman of the Pojoaque Tribe housing authority in Santa Fe, NM, makes over \$40,000 a year, twice the State average. But when HUD gave the housing authority \$1 million for home repairs, it spent the first \$45,000 on Viarrial's own five-bedroom home. Most of the rest went to remodel the homes of friends and relatives of Viarrial and the housing authority director.

Mr. President, these are just a few of the many abuses found by Seattle Times reporters last year, and I can say with confidence that there are most likely many more such abuses that have not been discovered. The American taxpayers deserve better than this. When we in the U.S. Senate tell them that their money is going to worthwhile programs to provide housing for the poorest native Americans, it is our duty to ensure that it is.

As many of you know, two officials at the Department of Housing and Urban Development were removed from their positions in the Office of Native American Programs as a result of this scandal. Furthermore, the HUD inspector general has issued a report confirming that the Seattle Times allegations are in fact true and recommending that the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act of 1996 be amended to ensure better oversight of Indian housing authorities at HUD. These are positive developments that should be applauded. But no actions have been taken against the tribes responsible for the abuse of taxpayer money.

That is why I am offering an amendment today intended to send notice that the misuse and misallocation of taxpayer dollars will no longer be tolerated. It will be punished and punished severely. Anyone involved will be permanently barred from participating in the program, and must reimburse that program. I would have preferred to go further, but this amendment is the strongest that can be accepted and passed. It is a simple amendment that should have been law a long time ago.

I urge my colleagues to join me in my effort to inject fairness and accountability into a program rife with abuse and mismanagement. It is the least we can do for the millions of American taxpayers who expect their hard-earned money to be used wisely.

AMENDMENT NO. 959

(Purpose: To make available \$1,000,000 for the Neutral Buoyancy Simulator program of NASA)

On page 70, line 18, strike out "1999." and insert in lieu thereof "1999: Provided, That of the amount appropriated or otherwise made

available by this heading, \$1,000,000 may be available for the Neutral Buoyancy Simulator program.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 960

On page 16, line 21, strike \$10,693,000,000” and insert in lieu thereof “10,159,000”.

On page 16, line 23, strike “\$9,200,000” and insert “8,666,000”.

On page 23, line 6, insert “and contract expertise” after “technical assistance”.

On page 23, line 24, strike “and 1995” and insert in lieu thereof “1995, and 1997”.

On page 27, line 17, insert “for” after “charge”.

On page 27, line 22, insert “or moderate income family” after “family”.

On page 27, line 24, strike “payment” and insert “prepayment”.

On page 28, line 1, insert “of” after the first “the”.

On page 28, line 8, insert “if” after “and”.

On page 28, line 13, insert “from” after “move”.

On page 28, line 14, strike “of” and insert “or”.

On page 28, line 22, strike “223” and insert “220”.

On page 35, line 10, insert before the period, the following: “: *Provided further*, That any unobligated balances available or recaptures in, or which become available in the Emergency Shelter Grants Program account, Supportive Housing Program account, Supplemental Assistance for Facilities to Assist the Homeless account, Shelter Plus Care account, Innovative Homeless Initiatives Demonstration Program account and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation (SRO) account, shall be transferred to and merged with the amounts in this account and shall be used for purposes under this account”.

On page 45, after line 18, insert the following:

“(d) Public and Assisted Housing Rents, Income Adjustments and Preferences.

“(1) Section 402(a) of The Balanced Budget Downpayment Act, I is amended by striking “fiscal year 1997” and insert in lieu thereof “fiscal year 1998.

“(2) Section 402(f) of The Balanced Budget Downpayment Act, I is amended by striking “fiscal years 1996 and 1997” and inserting in lieu thereof “fiscal years 1997 and 1998”.

On page 47, beginning on line 24, strike out “Account Transition” and all that follows through line 7 on page 48, and redesignate the sections accordingly.

On page 51, line 11, insert before the period “or demolition”.

“HOME PROGRAM FORMULA

“SEC. 217. The first sentence of section 217(b)(3) of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act is amended by striking “only those jurisdictions that are allocated an amount of \$500,000 or greater shall receive an allocation” and inserting in lieu thereof the following: “jurisdictions that are allocated an amount of \$500,000 or more, and participating jurisdictions (other than consortia that fail to renew the membership of all of their member jurisdictions) that are allocated an amount less than \$500,000, shall receive an allocation”.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I think this should take care of the amendments for tonight. In the managers’ amendment, the first item is a technical correction to EPA language related to cross-collateralization of State revolving funds. The language has been requested by the Environment and Public Works Committee.

The second item, requested by Senators MACK and GRAHAM, is to enable

the State of Florida to use funds obligated and available to the State of Florida under title II of the Clean Water Act to make a grant to Monroe County, FL. This is budget neutral, and similar to other amendments on VA-HUD bills.

Third, this would ensure that the Council on Environmental Quality use only those resources provided to its direct appropriations to support its activity.

The fourth item deletes the prohibition on FEMA disaster relief expenditures relative to beaches. It is expected that the authorizing committee will be addressing this shortly.

There is another amendment, a very important amendment, on page 16, which readjusts the section 8 contract renewal account from \$9.2 billion to \$8.666 billion, as provided by the Budget Committee, to put the bill in compliance with the budget resolution and the 602(b) allocation.

The sixth amendment limits locality pay increases for VA employees found guilty of sexual harassment.

The seventh amendment makes \$1 million available in transition funds for the Neutral Buoyancy Simulator Program.

The eighth amendment authorizes HUD to bar persons violating the Indian block grant housing program from participating in the program in the future.

The other eight amendments are truly technical amendments. The HOPE Six account, the preservation account, McKinney homeless account, PHA account, account structure, demolition grants as part of HUD multifamily disposition authority, and grandfathering all existing home jurisdictions for home funding allocations.

Mr. President, I ask my ranking member if there are any further items that she has.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this side of the aisle has no additional amendments to add to the managers’ amendment.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I gather we are ready to move to adoption of the amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendments, en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 956 through 960) were agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

FEMA

Mr. GREGG. Would the Senator from Missouri yield for a question?

Mr. BOND. I would be glad to yield.

Mr. GREGG. Would the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies agree that the Federal Emergency Management Agency should act in a swift manner to settle its account with

the Rockingham County jail in Brentwood, NH? As the Senator from Missouri may know, the county jail sustained flooding of more than 3 feet of water during a storm this past October. The county has been looking to FEMA for reimbursement of 75 percent of the damage it usually covers when there is a disaster.

Mr. BOND. Has FEMA settled any of this?

Mr. GREGG. Yes, the county has received roughly \$150,000 from FEMA, but there is still about \$178,000 outstanding. Most of the money paid to Rockingham County came only after a meeting this past March 3, which I hosted in my office with officials from FEMA and Rockingham County Commissioner Tom Battles. At that meeting, we were encouraged by FEMA that the outstanding balance would be settled within the next few months after some more flood mapping was conducted. With adequate time having passed and a new fiscal year on the way, it is only fair to Rockingham County and the State of New Hampshire that this issue be settled as budgets have to be structured.

Mr. Bond. I would say that I do agree that FEMA should work very quickly on this.

PARTICULATE MATTER RESEARCH

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998 that we are considering today allocates \$35 million in the administration’s budget request for research on the public health effects of airborne particulate matter. I have an amendment that simply states that these studies employ some basic sound scientific methods. This is an extremely important provision, but I would withdraw my amendment, if we could engage in a colloquy to assure that the issue will be addressed in conference.

This language will be an important part of assuring that we protect public health. Last week, the EPA finalized its rule on particulate matter. Many have questioned the science behind this rule and a great deal of uncertainty exists over the effect of particulate matter on public health. As we reach this juncture, we must remember the reason for this standard: to enhance public health. The only way we can be sure that the standard will, in fact, provide the desired benefits is through sound science. Lacking sound science, we may end up with standards that don’t provide any benefit, but cost the public dearly. While we often hear about costs on industry, we must remember that those costs are passed down to individuals in the form of higher prices and higher State and local taxes. When individuals truly gain significant benefits from a standard, they are indeed better off. However, if we raise their costs for nothing or little in return, we simply make them poorer and less able to pay for basic necessities, such as health care. Last week you may recall, one District of Columbia woman died

in her apartment because of the heat and the fact that she could not afford air conditioning. Such stories remind us that poverty represents one of the greatest risks to public health. Hence, we should make sure that new regulations do not simply make people poorer. If we don't pursue sound science, we may impose regulations that actually decrease public health. By demanding that particulate matter research relies on the best available scientific methods, we can gain better knowledge over the impacts of the regulations and reform them to assure that we are actually enhancing overall public health.

Mr. BOND. I thank my colleague from Kansas for his comments. In a memorandum from the President to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency that accompanied this rule, the President committed that no new controls on businesses would be imposed until the science behind this rulemaking is reviewed 5 years from now. The results of this research will help in that decision. This is why the bill almost doubles funding for particulate matter research over last year's level.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I thank the Senator from Missouri for recognizing the importance of these studies and my recommendation. Given the significance of this research and overall limitations on funding, I think it is important that we are assured that the research will include those studies that will help us determine whether a cause-effect relationship exists between exposure to particulate matter and adverse health impacts. These include: First, controlled inhalation studies that will allow us to determine the effects of exposure to particulate matter at different concentration levels and the mechanism by which particulate matter could affect health; second, prospective epidemiology studies based on individual exposure measurements that will allow us to better examine the role of possible alternative causes of the measured increase in risk; and third, the relationship of outdoor, indoor, and personal exposures to particulate matter. Without these types of studies, we may not be any further along in resolving the scientific uncertainties associated with this rulemaking. I further believe that the results of this research should be made available for independent scientific review.

Mr. SHELBY. If my colleagues would yield for a moment, I would like to endorse the well-reasoned recommendations made by the Senator for Kansas. The recently issued particulate matter rule is troubling given the scientific uncertainties and the significant costs that will be imposed on the government, citizens, and businesses in Alabama—and in the rest of the Nation—that are already struggling to meet the air quality standards required by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. The cost of implementing the new particulate matter standards is staggering, especially considering the questions that

remain about the actual public health benefit. Further scientific examination of the matter is necessary prior to placing additional economic burdens on the American public. Premature implementation of the standards could be far more damaging to the Nation and I strongly recommend taking the time to fully review the scientific basis of the rulemaking.

Mr. BOND. My colleagues from Kansas and Alabama are correct. These studies are critical to determining whether the EPA's rulemaking is appropriate. I concur with the Senators in the importance of this research and ensuring that the particular research projects funded address the most critical questions associated with particulate matter exposure.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I also believe it is important that the research program include funding for the reanalysis of the American Cancer Society study on particulate matter that was used as the basis for EPA's risk estimate. My understanding is that the Health Effects Institute, an independent research organization that is already reviewing some of the epidemiology data, is willing to undertake this reanalysis and has received permission from the American Cancer Society, but currently lacks adequate funding to do a complete reanalysis.

Mr. BOND. I thank my colleagues for their recommendations. This will be an important issue to address when we go to conference with the House.

LYONS VA MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I would like to express my support for a provision in the House version of the fiscal year 1998 VA-HUD appropriations bill to provide \$21.1 million in funding for the construction of an ambulatory care addition at the Lyons, NJ, VA Medical Center. This facility is sorely needed by the veterans in New Jersey, and I hope the Senate will recede to the House on this issue during the conference.

The Lyons VA Medical Center serves nearly 75 percent of New Jersey's veterans, and this funding will provide vital medical care for veterans who receive care on an outpatient basis. It will provide for necessary construction and renovations to enhance Lyons' clinics, diagnostic and treatment services, emergency department, and support functions. The funding will make a significant contribution to improving the access to quality medical care by New Jersey's veterans.

At a time when New Jersey's aging veteran population has an increasing need for VA health care services, we have an obligation to ensure that their health care needs are met. As a member of the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, I urge my colleagues on the committee to include this funding in the conference agreement.

Mr. BOND. As the Senator from New Jersey is aware, the outcome of the conference cannot be forecast. However, I will give strong consideration to

the funding for the Lyons VA Medical Center ambulatory care addition in conference.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I, too, appreciate the Senator's support for the ambulatory care addition at the Lyons VA Medical Center, and I will join Senator BOND in doing all I can to support this funding during the conference.

PLANT GENOME INITIATIVE

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I bring to the attention of my colleagues a provision in this measure which directs \$40 million to begin the new plant genome initiative to help keep U.S. agriculture on top in the 21st century. The United States currently has a robust Federal investment in biotechnology in the human health field. While this remains a national priority, I think it is critical that we begin building on the common foundation in basic science to bring the power of biotechnology to bear in agriculture. We cannot sit idly and expect to remain the world's leader in agriculture production. U.S. agriculture currently exports a record \$60 billion in agricultural products with a net trade surplus of \$30 billion. This is about the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. agriculture which means that it is about meeting the world's growing nutritional needs, protecting U.S. jobs, and preserving the environment.

The future of corn and other plant species is written in the genetic code and genome mapping will give us the precise locations of genes that control important traits that can be manipulated to make corn and other vital commodities more drought tolerant; freeze tolerant; tolerant to certain chemicals, weeds, or bugs; disease resistant; less toxic and more digestible which is critical because it could lower phosphorous and nitrogen levels in animal waste.

This action incorporates the initial recommendations of the interagency working group on plant genomes [IWG] which was formed recently at my request to develop a scientific and administrative consensus on how best to accomplish this ambitious new effort to address the needs of 21st Century. The world population wants more food, less expensive food, more nutritious food, and they want it produced on less land in a more environment-friendly way. In this half century, we have seen U.S. agriculture double production by utilizing new technologies. Biotechnology will be the key in the next century to meet the needs of a world population which is expected to double in the next 30 years while protecting the world's natural resources.

According to scientists, today, biotechnology makes it possible to enter the genetic world of plants to gain a greater degree of control over the selection of genes than was possible with traditional breeding. It is now possible to locate the genes for certain traits, cut them from one organism, and paste them into another, even if the target organism is of another species. In order

to accomplish a genetic transfer between organisms using biotechnology, scientists have to be able to find the location of the genes that control a given characteristic, such as size, color, or resistance to disease. This new initiative seeks to provide a map of these locations so that scientists and producers can capitalize on this vast potential to benefit humankind and the environment.

The original idea was introduced to me by the Missouri Cornrowers Association who presented a comprehensive business plan to map the corn genome devised by the National Cornrowers Association working in conjunction with private and public scientific experts. With this additional money provided in this legislation the initiative can be expanded beyond corn to include other economically significant crops such as rice, soybeans, and wheat. After consulting with a number of scientists in Missouri and elsewhere, I have concluded that this is the kind of research that will unlock the information which holds the promise of addressing dramatically the challenges facing the world in the coming century. My hat is off to those who argued convincingly that this blockbuster initiative is vital to address the economic, nutritional, and environmental needs of the next century and worthy of blockbuster support from the Federal Government. I also applaud the administration's IWG for their strong support in beginning to formate the most scientifically and administratively feasible way to proceed so that we can maximize the return on the taxpayers' investment.

The IWG on plant genomes which was empaneled at my request to make recommendations on the plant genome initiative, consists of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Energy, Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Office of Management and Budget. In its recently-released report, while funding sources were not identified, the value of this initiative was validated and recommendations were advanced to provide for international cooperation, private-public partnerships, and open public access to all the information discovered. The money awarded under this act will be done so by the National Science Foundation on a competitive basis with peer review.

Finally, I note that it is imperative that work continue to be done to integrate this initiative into the interagency effort that the IWG recommends. This means that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will have to work with us on coordinating their efforts with NSF and other agencies and they will have to provide recommendations on additional sources of funds for the effort within their budget.

PLANT GENOME RESEARCH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Missouri,

the chairman of the VA/HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, for his foresight in providing funding through the National Science Foundation for plant genome research. This is a critical program for American agriculture involving a meaningful amount of money—\$40 million—to advance work on plant genome projects for farm crops that contribute significantly to our economy. It has been my pleasure to work with Senator BOND for some time on the plant genome mapping effort.

Iowa is a national leader in the production of corn and soybeans. These two crops are mainstays of the Iowa economy. In order to remain competitive in the world market, we need to understand in increasing detail what the genetic mechanisms of these crops are and how they work. Researchers in many fields can use the results of the genome mapping effort to enhance these crops. The genome mapping research results will help us to understand new and better ways to increase crop yields, discover new uses and products, better the health of the plant by reducing risks to disease and pests, and to help protect the environment. This bodes well for the corn grower and soybean producer by increasing the value of the crop and, thus, increasing farm income.

I will continue to work with Senator BOND to see that this effort receives proper funding both through the NSF and the Department of Agriculture. An interagency effort, along with a strong, effective, meaningful public/private partnership is key to the ultimate success of the plant genome mapping project. We must also be aware of international genome mapping efforts. Where possible it is necessary to cooperate with those efforts.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise today to support the National Science Foundation plant genome initiative that is funded in the VA/HUD, Independent Agencies appropriations bill. I want to commend Senator BOND, chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, for his leadership in developing this initiative. This project will be funded with new money and will not affect current NSF programs.

The plant genome initiative, as included in the bill, is an expansion of the current, NSF Arabidopsis genome project to map and sequence the Arabidopsis genome. The plant genome initiative will advance the current Arabidopsis project and will move us beyond the current programs to more economically significant crops, such as corn, soybeans, wheat, and rice.

To compete in the global market, U.S. agriculture must continually strive to efficiently and economically improve production capabilities—such as combating serious threats from disease, pests, and climate changes—without harming the environment. The plant genome initiative will provide us the information necessary to significantly improve the environment and reduce crop and livestock production

costs at the same time. It is a win-win project for producers, for consumers, and for the environment.

This project will give us the basic, fundamental knowledge necessary to ensure that our consumers continue to receive an abundant supply of high quality, wholesome food at reasonable prices. To meet the growing demand for U.S. agricultural products, we will need to increase production approximately three-fold in the next 50 years. The plant genome initiative will set us on the right path toward meeting that goal without harming the environment.

The plant genome initiative will have other far-reaching benefits, as well. It may lead to significant reductions in crop losses while also reducing our reliance on pesticides. It will allow us to improve animal nutrition to increase meat productivity. It will, also, allow us to meet consumer demands for higher quality food at reasonable prices. These are just a few of the benefits that are possible with the plant genome initiative.

I, again, want to commend Senator BOND for his foresight in providing funding for the building of a foundation that will allow us to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Mr. President, this initiative is critically important to U.S. consumers and to U.S. agriculture. I urge my colleagues to support the NSF plant genome initiative as included in the VA/HUD appropriations bill.

MARK-TO-MARKET

Mr. MACK. I would like to commend Senator BOND for addressing the section 8 contract expiration issue by including S. 513, the Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act of 1997 in the VA/HUD appropriations bill. This legislation, which is cosponsored by my colleague from Missouri and Senators D'AMATO, BENNETT, DOMENICI, FAIRCLOTH, GRAMS, and CHAFEE, is a national priority for reforming the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HUD multifamily housing programs and reducing the escalating costs of project-based section 8 renewals. According to preliminary estimates by the Congressional Budget Office, this legislation will save the American taxpayer about \$4.6 billion in section 8 funds over the next 10 years. This legislation not only saves scarce Federal resources, it also protects the Federal investment in affordable housing by screening out distressed properties and noncompliant owners from the Federal programs and addresses HUD's management problems with this portfolio by utilizing capable public and private third parties.

It is critical to enact this legislation into law this year. The Banking Committee unanimously approved S. 513 as part of its budget reconciliation package this June. Unfortunately, the Senate and House subconferees were unable to come to an agreement on this legislation and subsequently, it was dropped out of the reconciliation package. Accordingly, I will continue to

push this legislation and strongly support Senator BOND's effort in passing S. 513 as part of the appropriations bill.

When Secretary Cuomo testified before the Banking Committee on S. 513, he raised several concerns about the restructuring process outlined in the bill. But he also indicated his willingness to address those concerns through negotiations with the Senate. I want to point out that significant progress has been made to address the administration's concerns with the bill. Two major areas where agreement was reached relate to the use of third parties or participating administrative entities [PAE] and the use of tenant-based assistance. On the use of PAE's, HUD has agreed to maintain the Senate's priority for State and local housing finance agencies to serve as restructuring entities. However, the Senate has agreed to provide additional flexibility to the Secretary in selecting qualified PAE's while protecting the public purpose. Also, the Senate and administration have agreed to provide discretion to PAE's in determining whether tenant-based or project-based assistance will be provided for qualified properties after restructuring.

I would like to ask Senator BOND for his assurance that, as this process moves forward, he will endeavor to assure that the agreements made with the administration are incorporated into the bill.

Mr. BOND. I congratulate Senator MACK for his work in developing a workable solution to the section 8 contract renewal problem, and also Secretary Cuomo for his willingness to work with the Senate. Needless to say, it is my hope that this issue still can be resolved in budget reconciliation or through the regular authorization process. However, if it becomes necessary, we will pursue this issue through the appropriations process. I look forward to working with the Banking Committee as we move forward and I will endeavor to include any changes that are based on agreements between your committee and HUD. It is likely that those agreements would be incorporated during the conference with the House.

As a member of the Banking Committee during the last Congress and as a cosponsor of the bill, I appreciate the work that the authorizing committee has done on this legislation. Multifamily portfolio restructuring is an urgent priority. I look forward to continuing our work together in resolving the contract renewal crisis.

Mr. MACK. I thank the Senator very much for his work and dedication to this issue. I look forward to our continued cooperative effort in resolving this critical issue.

Ms. SNOW. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to address my colleagues on a matter of critical importance to veterans in the Northeast. First, I would like to express my appreciation to the Appropriations Committee and the VA-HUD Subcommittee for their hard work on this bill.

This package contains over \$40 billion for the VA, including an increase in funding for VA medical care and research. The committee's recommendation for the VA represents an increase of almost \$93 million above the President's budget request. The committee rejected the budget agreement recommendation to reduce VA discretionary funding by \$273 million below the President's fiscal year 1998 request, arguing that such a reduction would result in fewer eligible veterans receiving comprehensive medical care, reductions to basic maintenance and repair of medical facilities, and additional delays in the processing of benefits claims. The committee stated that the outcome of such budget reductions would be completely unacceptable. I strongly agree with this sentiment, and I would like to congratulate my colleagues on their efforts.

In this spirit, I would also like to comment on changes in the VA health care system affecting a number of veterans health care facilities in the Northeast and elsewhere.

Under the new regional allocation formula being implemented by the VA, the New England network could be cut by as much as 6.36 percent from its fiscal year 1996 funding level. I realize that the New England region cut may actually be lower than the 6.36 percent over 3 years originally projected, and the numbers will be reevaluated every year. However, under the new allocation plan, many States will lose funding while others will receive considerable increases.

The VA says there will be no reduction in services to veterans in facilities experiencing cuts and that cost-savings achieved through consolidation of operations and greater efficiencies in the system will make up for the shortfalls. However, it is not clear whether this will, in fact, be the case. I appreciate the fact that the committee is waiting for the results of a General Accounting Office study, due in September, on the allocation formula. I think it is very important that we ensure that funding under this new system is fair and equitable.

Maine has a very large veterans population—152,000—dispersed throughout the State. Togus is the only veterans community hospital in my State to serve this population. Currently, Togus provides services almost exclusively to mandatory—category A—veterans. In fact, less than 1 percent of Togus' services go to nonmandatory veterans. Togus cannot be viewed as overfunded compared to other VA medical facilities. And yet, this facility, which has already made great strides in increasing efficiency and rooting out waste, may experience a reduction in funding under the new allocation formula.

I believe there is a limit to the kind of restructuring that some of these facilities can be expected to absorb without undermining the quality of care and the availability of basic services. Moreover, I am concerned that a redis-

tribution of funds away from New England presents a potential danger that the programs under the draft strategic plan could be underfunded.

I would remind my colleagues once again that the Senate Appropriations Committee rejected the budget agreement recommendation to reduce VA discretionary funding by \$273 million below the President's fiscal year 1998 request because such a reduction would result in fewer eligible veterans receiving comprehensive medical care.

I strongly believe that each veteran must be treated with the dignity and respect he or she deserves by virtue of having worn our Nation's uniform, and we have a commitment to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

A fair allocation of VA resources must take into account the regional impact of all of the regional networks. As such, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and in the House to ensure that the bill we send to the President provides a fair and equitable allocation of funding for VA hospitals.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP CENTERS PROGRAM

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I rise today in support of my friend, Senator KIT BOND and his efforts to include funding for important community development programs within the VA-HUD Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1998. In particular, I would like to highlight the provision of \$12 million for the Community Outreach Partnerships Centers [COPC] program. I commend the subcommittee for its diligence in funding this program at this level.

The COPC program provides assistance to public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education for a wide range of community outreach activities. These colleges and universities may utilize COPC funds to address a variety of local needs, including housing, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, job training, and crime prevention. The program thus utilizes and leverages the enormous resources of our institutions of higher learning to establish partnerships with local neighborhoods and communities to solve their common problems.

Mr. President, I would like to applaud the outstanding community outreach efforts of Long Island University [LIU] located in my home State of New York and bring these efforts to the attention of the Subcommittee on VA-HUD Appropriations. Long Island University, founded in 1886, has a current enrollment of 24,000 students and conducts a variety of community oriented programs at each of its six New York campuses.

LIU's various community outreach programs at its Brooklyn campus are particularly successful and well suited to the COPC program. For instance, the university operates a number of educational programs for senior citizens and New York City school students, including underprivileged and

minority students. In addition, the university operates a small business development institute, a speech and pathology clinic which serves needy persons with disabilities free of charge, and a collaborative career development and cooperative education initiative.

Mr. President, Long Island University has an outstanding track record of community involvement. It has formed successful partnerships with state and local governments, including the New York City Board of Education, as well as community and business groups. It has successfully leveraged additional funding from a wide variety of sources. I believe that its activities are a successful example of positive and constructive change within the community.

I thank Senator BOND for his efforts and I commend the community outreach activities of Long Island University as a model for funding under the COPC program.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I appreciate my friend Senator D'AMATO's kind words in support of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. The subcommittee is aware of the extensive community oriented programs of Long Island university. The University is to be commended to HUD as a model for successful involvement within the surrounding community and is worthy of consideration for funding under the Community Outreach Partnerships Center Program.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I am pleased that once again the Senate has chosen to continue our Nation's commitment to the future through the exploration and study of space. Especially as we stand here today knowing that the Sojourner Rover continues its unprecedented exploration of the surface of Mars. NASA is now turning its attention to the many new missions scheduled for future, including the construction of the international space station. Mr. President, we must continue to invest in this pursuit of knowledge.

No one can predict the outcome of our investment in the space program, but one thing is certain, and that is generations to come will benefit from the knowledge and experience gained from the investment we have made, and continued exploration of space will present many more opportunities to learn.

First, the space program will provide significant contributions not only to Americans, but people all around the world. We have already seen results of space-related research in life science. Recently I learned of a NASA technology which is now being used to help diagnose vision problems in our children. This coming school year, the State of Florida will be using this technology to screen all students in kindergarten. By discovering vision problems at such an early age, we will prevent many of these children from falling behind because of undetected impairments. This type of commercial appli-

cation of NASA born technology is virtually limitless.

Second, our Nation's leadership role in high technology research and development must be maintained and enhanced. The aerospace industry is a significant area of America's international competitiveness.

Third, projects such as the international space station help to continue and expand cooperation among the world's nations. Our collaborative efforts with the Europeans, Japanese, and Russians only serve to strengthen our relations in a global community. Our space program enables us to exchange exciting ideas with the world, and accelerate the pace of our own technology and space exploration.

Mr. President I believe that these are very compelling reasons for continued support of our space program. NASA deserves our support. Congress and the administration should provide the appropriate resources needed for NASA to successfully manage and enhance our space program. We must invest in our future, and invest in ourselves.

PILOT PROGRAM FOR AFFORDABLE DRUGS FOR
THE TERMINALLY ILL

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to address a critical need in our society, the need for affordable health care for the terminally ill. Today, in the fiscal year 1998 Treasury and general government appropriations bill, a bill which I otherwise supported, I believe we did a disservice to those suffering from the HIV virus, cancer, and other terminal diseases. We failed to authorize a pilot program which might have severely reduced the cost of essential, and at this time very expensive, drugs which significantly prolong patients' lives and enhance their quality of life.

The Treasury and general government appropriations bill includes a repeal of section 1555 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994. This so-called cooperative purchasing provision would have allowed local governments to purchase items from the schedule of prices established by the Government Services Administration [GSA] for the Federal Government. On the face of it, this provision had some appeal, as a measure that might save money for local governments. However, many argued that section 1555 would bankrupt small businesses, increase all prices in the long term, and undermine the reliability and safety provided by a local manufacturing and distribution network. The concern about section 1555 was widespread and profound and, therefore, I supported a repeal of the provision. However, I favored one exception, which would address a critical need and give us a chance to observe the effects of section 1555. I favored the authorization of a carefully defined pilot program in cooperative purchasing of drugs for terminally ill patients.

Public hospitals in cities and counties throughout the United States are desperate to reduce the cost of health care for the terminally ill. Last year,

the Nation's largest city, county, and State hospitals lost an average of \$86 million per year by providing care to uninsured an underinsured patients. To avoid closure or bankruptcy, many of these institutions have to limit their more expensive services, such as the new generation of life-prolonging AIDS drugs. At the same time, many AIDS patients are deprived of adequate care because they cannot afford \$15,000 per year for AIDS drug therapy. State and local programs must purchase these drugs for them.

The Department of Health and Human Services has agreed to coordinate a pilot program which would enable State and local governments to benefit from Federal Government rates when they purchase drugs for life-threatening conditions. Recent studies suggest that this could save public hospitals more than 25 percent of their current expenditures on these essential drugs. These savings would, in turn, make it possible for hospitals to help more Americans battling against terminal illness.

I think we all agree that the terminally ill and those who serve them deserve our support in making their medical care more affordable and available. At the same time, I am acutely aware of the concern of veterans' groups and others that this kind of program could eventually result in higher health care costs for all. Therefore, this pilot program would be narrowly focused and of finite length. I encourage concerned groups to contribute suggestions as we define those program constraints. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this pilot program may fail. If so, we will have learned from our error. If the program works, however, if it truly brings down the costs of life-prolonging and potentially life-saving drugs, could we live with ourselves if we refused to give it a chance?

DRUG ELIMINATION GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I would like to state my strong support for the VA-HUD Subcommittee's efforts to support funding in this legislation to combat the twin scourges of drugs and crime in low-income housing throughout the Nation. I am greatly encouraged by the subcommittee's action in maintaining \$290 million in funding for the Drug Elimination Grant Program.

Under this important program, the Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] makes funds available to local housing authorities for the purpose of combating and preventing crime, including drug-related crime. Housing authorities have great flexibility in determining how best to use these funds to address local needs. Many authorities have used drug elimination funding to create and expand community policing efforts, to make capital improvements to improve security, to fund drug awareness, prevention, and treatment programs and to organize tenant patrols and neighborhood watch programs.

I am also fully aware of the subcommittee's inclusion of \$30 million for the New Approach antidrug program and I strongly support this provision. This funding will be available to help combat drugs and crime in non-federally assisted low-income housing which is too often overlooked in the traditional public housing programs.

However, I would like to state my concern with one aspect of the structure of the account which provides funding for the Drug Elimination Program. This troubling aspect is the expansion of a set-aside for the Operation Safe Home initiative, administered by the HUD Office of Inspector General, within that account. Let me be clear, I do not question the effectiveness or usefulness of the Operation Safe Home initiative. This initiative has had gratifying success in confiscating guns and drugs from public housing.

However, I am concerned with the source of funding for this initiative. By reducing the amount of funding available for drug elimination grants, we are effectively cutting into local efforts to combat crime and drugs. As chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, the committee with authorizing jurisdiction over the multitude of HUD programs, I was pleased to cosponsor S. 462, the Public Housing Reform and Responsibility Act of 1997. This legislation, which was passed out of the Banking Committee on May 8, 1997 by a unanimous 18-0 vote, contains an important provision which would allow funding for the Operation Safe Home initiative to be provided from the HUD headquarters' reserve fund. I am convinced that this is a far more appropriate funding vehicle for this initiative.

Like many other important HUD programs, such as public housing operating assistance and housing for the elderly and disabled, the administration requested a cut in the Drug Elimination Grant Program. This proposed \$20 million cut would occur as a result of a set-aside within the program to fund the HUD inspector general's Operation Safe Home initiative.

Mr. President, I am grateful that the VA-HUD Subcommittee did not follow the approach adopted in the House, and instead reduced the administration's recommended cut of \$20 million to a \$15 million cut. However, I believe that even this reduced cut in antidrug funding is too much and the full amount should be restored to the program.

I express my wish to continue to work with the VA-HUD Subcommittee as we move toward conference with the House of Representatives on this important legislation. I am confident that attempts to increase this set-aside at conference will be unsuccessful and I am hopeful that together the Banking and Appropriations Committees can agree upon a more appropriate source of funding for the Operation Safe Home initiative.

Mr. President, in conclusion, let me once again thank my good friend Sen-

ator BOND for his leadership and diligence in crafting a VA-HUD appropriations bill which makes tough choices with the limited amount of funds available. I look forward to working together as the process continues.

SELF-HELP HOUSING

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I would like to express my appreciation to Senator KIT BOND for his efforts to provide funding within the VA-HUD Appropriations bill to expand homeownership activities through the Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. In this regard, I note with particular appreciation the provision of \$30 million in funding for the Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing program.

This program was expanded and reauthorized by the Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act [HOPE Act], which I was pleased to sponsor. It provides an unparalleled opportunity to support local housing and homeownership initiatives. Specifically, the HOPE Act provided for the support of housing organizations which utilize a self-help approach to homeownership opportunities.

Mr. President, I would like to commend and bring to the attention of the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee the outstanding efforts of one particular self-help housing provider located in my home state of New York. The Riverhead Revitalization and Preservation Corp. [Riverhead Corp.], under the guidance and leadership of Ms. Patricia Stark, utilizes donated labor from volunteers and potential homeowners to develop and rehabilitate homes on Long Island, NY.

The Riverhead Corp. is helping to reverse the decline of neighborhoods by renovating blighted homes and providing a stake in the community for first-time homeowners. In addition, the Riverhead Corp. employs a revolving loan-fund strategy which reinvests proceeds from home sales in the further development of housing opportunities. Thus, the Riverhead Corp. helps to stimulate community revitalization, promotes job and business creation, and provides housing for deserving low- and moderate-income working families.

I commend the efforts of the Riverhead Corp. to the Subcommittee and to HUD as a model of success which would be worthy of support under the self-help homeownership auspices of the Capacity Building program funded by this legislation. Once again, I would like to thank Senator KIT BOND for his efforts to support increased homeownership throughout the Nation.

Mr. BOND. I thank Senator ALFONSE D'AMATO for his support of this VA-HUD Appropriations legislation and for our joint efforts to bring the benefits of homeownership to as many American families as possible. The subcommittee recognizes the local efforts of the Riverhead Corp. Revitalization and Preservation to increase access to

homeownership on Long Island, where I know housing and development costs can often be prohibitive. I urge the Department of Housing and Urban Development to seriously consider any application for assistance on the part of the Riverhead Corp. under the Capacity Building program initiative. I too commend the Riverhead Corp. for its successful and innovative efforts to improve communities and enhance homeownership opportunities.

VETERANS PROGRAMS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am pleased to express my support for S. 1034, the fiscal year 1998 Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies appropriation bill, and most particularly for title I, the part of the bill dealing with VA.

I realize that this has again been a very difficult year for funding issues, with a reduced 602(b) allocation, agency spending being cut by reconciliation measures, and increased competition for what limited funding remained available. The Chair of the VA-HUD Subcommittee, Senator BOND, the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI, and the other members of the subcommittee deserve credit for their remarkable efforts with regard to veterans' needs, as evident in this bill.

Mr. President, I remind my colleagues that the budget resolution included proposed reductions in VA spending below the current fiscal year 1997 level, and below what is generally considered the current services level. At the time that the Senate passed the balanced budget resolution, I took strong exception to the proposal funding for veterans. In my view, the budget resolution asked veterans to carry a disproportionate share of the burden to balance the Federal budget. Realizing, too, that slashing discretionary spending—especially for health care—was inappropriate, the Committee on Appropriations [Committee] saw fit to alter the spending priorities for veterans. Instead, the committee was able to increase funding for VA medical care, research, and the State Veterans Home Program. This is a tremendous achievement. While I would always want to increase support for veterans programs further, I am enormously pleased with the result of their efforts, and would like to highlight several accomplishments in particular.

For health care, the committee recommended \$17.02 billion for VA medical care, an increase of \$68 million over the President's request. The committee also recognized that VA is to retain, under new authorizing legislation which is part of the budget agreement, the so-called medical care cost recovery [MCCR] collections estimated to reach \$604 million in fiscal year 1998. Because collections of these third-

party receipts has grown from \$267 million in fiscal year 1991 to over \$557 million in fiscal year 1996, I am encouraged by VA's ability to generate non-appropriated revenue. I note with caution however, that VA's outpatient billing remains problematic. Along with my colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, I intend to be attentive to VA's collection activities.

When combined, the committee's recommendation and the authorization for the retention of insurance moneys bring total discretionary resources for medical care to \$17.6 billion. As we proceed with Senate approval of the VA appropriations bill, it is important to note that this amount constitutes an increase of \$617 million over current spending.

I am also particular gratified by the committee's report language on the need for a community-based outpatient clinic [CBOC] in Charleston, the capital of my home State of West Virginia. Indeed, the committee noted that a Charleston CBOC would improve service to more than 27,000 veterans in Kanawha and surrounding counties, including Boone, Putnam, Lincoln, and Logan. Thousands of these veterans reside in rural areas, many miles from the nearest VA medical center. Many of them live in areas with no public transportation, where just a trip to the doctor can take several hours of driving time on winding, mountainous roads. A VA outpatient clinic in this part of West Virginia is long overdue.

Throughout my tenure on the Committee on Veteran's Affairs, I have witnessed the direct benefits of a strong research program, such as higher quality clinicians and discoveries in prosthetics, cancer, AIDS, and aging. These discoveries directly affect the everyday activities of veterans. After several years of flat funding, I believe that the time has come to increase the VA research appropriation. The Appropriations Committee agreed and included an increase in the VA medical and prosthetic research account. Although the increase—\$5 million—is modest, it sends an important signal to the VA research community that we value their work and the direct impact it has on our veterans.

The increase in research funding will help support important work on the health problems of atomic veterans, Vietnam-era veterans, and gulf war veterans. Over the years, we have witnessed the emergence of special health problems associated with each war. In response, VA researchers have made important gains in the understanding of each of these populations and their clinical needs. Their challenges continue, and we must make sure that their research efforts are well supported.

I also express my strong support for the committee's action to fully fund the Court of Veterans Appeal's Pro Bono Representation Program. This program is of utmost importance to our Nation's veterans. At a time when

the court is experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of appeals filed, it would be devastating to cut the funding of a program that matches up pro bono attorneys with indigent veterans. It is a small program, but its impact is great. In fact, the Pro Bono Program will be assigning its one thousandth case to a pro bono attorney on July 24, 1997.

Mr. President, although I am pleased with the overall outcome of this bill, I have concerns about the effect of the bill's appropriation for VA's general operating expenses account. The bill provides for \$786 million, which is \$41 million below the current budget and \$60 million below the budget request. This is a significant cut for VA to absorb, especially at a time when it is still taking VA an average of 135 days to process an original compensation claim. However, as we strive toward deficit reduction, Congress cannot continue to throw money at problems in the absence of effective leadership at agencies to bring about the change that is needed. Sadly, that absence has been profound at the Veterans Benefit Administration in recent years. It is time for VA to manage the benefits process, not just administer it. It is past time for VA to change, in major ways, beginning with the implementation of many of the recommendations contained in the recent reports of the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission and the National Academy of Public Administration.

Mr. President, there is no doubt that this is a very exciting time. VA has the potential for meaningful change. Whether it is in the area of a medical care or benefits administration, I believe that, on balance, the Committee on Appropriations has given VA the resources it needs to move forward with much needed reforms. I applaud the leadership of all the members of the Appropriations Committee, and especially those members on the VA-HUD Subcommittee.

Mr. President, in closing, I express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, the ranking Democrat on the Senate VA-HUD Subcommittee, for her continued efforts with respect to veterans' programs. This year, as she does every year, Senator MIKULSKI has shown her unwavering support for veterans. I am pleased to call her my colleague and friend.

CSOC

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I would like to engage the Senator from Maryland in a colloquy regarding the intent of report language included on her behalf in the Senate Report accompanying S. 1034, the fiscal year 1998 VA-HUD and Independent Agencies appropriations bill concerning NASA's Consolidated Space Operations Contract.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I would be pleased to engage in a colloquy concerning CSOC.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Would the Senator agree that it is not the intent of her report language to expand the

CSOC procurement to include elements of the Space Flight Operations Contract not presently envisioned to be part of the SCOC contract, as stipulated in the pending request for proposals.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator is correct. The intent of the report language is simply to ensure that NASA include all appropriate common support functions at all NASA centers under CSOC, as defined in the request for proposals.

DON'T UNDERFUND CRITICAL TOXIC CLEANUP

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies appropriations bill presents an all too common dilemma—inadequate funds and very deserving programs—and the choices we must make are very difficult indeed.

I appreciate the difficult job the chairman and ranking member had in dealing with an insufficient Section 602(b) allocation.

However, as a strong advocate for our environment, and as ranking on the Budget Committee, I am very disappointed at the level of funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's operating budget. The mark for EPA's operation is \$200 million below the President's request and the budget agreement.

I am specifically concerned that we are continuing to add duties to EPA without the accompanying resources. This budget does not provide the funding needed to meet Congress's demands that EPA carry out more cost-benefit analysis in its regulations, for additional outreach to small businesses, and for fuller consideration of stakeholders in the regulatory process.

Nor does it provide adequate funding to combat global warming. Indeed, at a recent Environment and Public Works Committee hearing the only issue on which all the witnesses agreed was the need for more funding for critical climate change research.

I am also disappointed that the mark does not include any funding increase for superfund. I understand the chairman believes that superfund must be reauthorized before that money is appropriated. I disagree with that assessment. However, I am working closely with Senators SMITH, BAUCUS, and CHAFEE and I expect we soon will have a bipartisan bill.

If that bill comes after this appropriations cycle, I will urge my colleagues to support a supplemental that funds hazardous waste clean up to the level in the budget agreement. The millions of people living near superfund sites deserve our efforts to fully fund this program.

I am also disappointed that the chairman's mark zeros-out Community Development Financial Institutions, or CDFI. One hundred twenty-five million dollars was included in the budget agreement. I understand the House included full funding for this important program and I look forward for a better outcome during the conference.

Mr. President, I am very pleased the Appropriations Committee, the members unanimously agreed to my amendment to transfer money for investigations of chemical accidents from EPA and OSHA to the Chemical Safety Board.

An independent Chemical Safety Board, with its expertise and objectivity, is the proper body to investigate and identify steps needed to prevent future accidents. In 1990, Congress established the independent Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board to do just that. The board was modeled on the respected and influential National Transportation Safety Board. As part of its reinventing government program, the administration cut funding for the chemical board and tried to transfer its authority to EPA and OSHA. Subsequent events, including an investigation in New Jersey, show that this reorganization was ill-advised.

By reviving the board, Congress is reasserting its authority and protecting the workers and communities around chemical industrial sites.

I want to thank those who helped revive this board. First, I want to acknowledge the help of Senator BOND and MIKULSKI. I also want to thank the public interest groups, the oil, chemical, and atomic workers, and the companies that have publicly recognized the advantage of having this board. I want to single out for acknowledgment Marathon Oil and the Rohm & Haas Corp. in that regard.

Mr. President, I ask that a letter signed by 19 public interest groups in support of the Lautenberg amendment to fund the Chemical Safety Board be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Finally, I want to thank the Chairman of the Committee for including report language assuring the citizens of Toms River, N.J. that the study of the cancer cluster will be completely carried out. The language in the report underscores the Federal commitment to pursuing the cause of the cancer cluster and making sure this research is completed.

Mr. President, as I close my statement, I want to once again acknowledge Senator BOND and MIKULSKI for the difficult job they did in face of inadequate resources.

EXHIBIT 1

July 17, 1997.

Hon. TED STEVENS,
Committee on Appropriations,
Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN STEVENS: As members of social justice, environmental, religious, and labor organizations we are writing to express our full support for a \$6 million appropriation to fund the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. We request your support and that of others on your committee in passing the Lautenberg amendment which would provide this funding.

Modelled after the respected and influential National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSHIB) was established by the 1990 Clean Air Act to independently

investigate the root causes of chemical accidents and offer recommendations on ways to prevent accidents in the future. However, seven years after its authorization and several years after the confirmation of three of its members, the board is still without funding.

In 1994, the Administration decided that the Board was redundant in light of efforts to reinvent government. Thus, the Board's duties were subsequently passed to two regulatory agencies, EPA and OSHA. To date these two agencies have done an abominable job in investigating chemical accidents. For example, 27 months following a major accident at Napp Technologies in Lodi, N.J., which claimed the lives of five workers, an accident investigation report has yet to be released. This is not the fault of the dedicated compliance personnel in the field. OSHA and EPA are primarily concerned with determining violations of specific standards, not with the kind of comprehensive investigations needed to determine the root causes of major chemical accidents. Further, questions have been raised about the legal jurisdiction of those agencies. For example, following an accident at a Tosco oil refinery in Martinez, Calif., EPA was barred from entering the facility to investigate the accident because the agency could not provide proof of their authority to enter. Finally, jurisdictional problems have plagued the attempt to delegate authority to investigate the causes of chemical accidents within two separate agencies.

The Chemical Safety Board, on the other hand, is an independent, non-regulatory body, and the Board's findings, conclusions, and recommendations cannot be admitted as evidence or used in litigation. In both this case and the case of transport accidents, Congress wisely chose to separate the regulatory agencies from those charged with investigations. Thus, the Board can investigate the root causes of industrial accidents, conduct research, oversee the performance of chemical safety standards, and recommend improvements in chemical manufacturing, processing, transport and storage free from political and industrial interference. Federal agencies, such as EPA and OSHA, are required to respond to, but are not bound to adopt, the high-profile recommendations issued by the Board. As is the case with recommendations made by the highly regarded NTSB, we would hope that those made by the Chemical Safety Board would be quickly and efficiently adhered to by industry.

Chemical accidents continue to occur on average 21 times a day in the United States, costing human lives, causing untold damage to property and the environment, and increasing health care and environmental clean-up costs. Recent chemical disasters clearly illustrate the need for this independent board and its work to refine, coordinate, direct, and improve federal chemical safety activities. Proper oversight could have prevented many of these tragedies, such as an accident last month at a fertilizer factor in Helena, Ark., which claimed the lives of several firefighters. This accident parallels a similar accident three years ago at another fertilizer factory near Sioux City, Iowa, which claimed the lives of three individuals.

We strongly support an appropriation of \$6 million to fund and finally make operational the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for the health and safety of our workers, communities, and environment. Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

RABBI DANIEL SWARTZ,
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life;
PHIL CLAPP,
Environmental Information Center;

RICK HIND,

Greenpeace;

DENNY LARSON,

National Oil Refinery Action Network, Communities for a Better environment California;

RICK ENGLER,

New Jersey Work Environment Council, New Jersey Right to Know and Act Coalition;

CAROLYN RAFFENSPERGER,

Science and Environmental Health Network;

CAROLYN HARTMANN,

U.S. Public Interest Research Group;

MICHAEL J. WRIGHT,

United Steelworkers of America;

JOANNE ROSSI,

Community/Labor Refinery Tracking Committee, Philadelphia;

JOEL A. TICKNER,

Work Environment Program, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Clean Production Action;

CAROL ANDRESS,

Environmental Defense Fund;

SANFORD LEWIS,

Good Neighbor Project for Sustainable Industries;

HILLEL GRAY,

National Environmental Law Center;

DR. DAVID WALLINGA,

Natural Resources Defense Council;

RICHARD MILLER,

Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union;

DEBBIE SEASE,

Sierra Club;

DR. THOM WHITE WOLF

FASSETT,

General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church;

SUSAN GOBRESKI,

Clean Water Action Pennsylvania; and

DR. NEIL CARMAN,

Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter;

LOW-INCOME HOUSING PRESERVATION FUNDING

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I would like to commend Senator BOND and Ranking Minority Member MIKULSKI for their steadfast recognition of the need to preserve our Nation's dwindling supply of affordable rental housing units. The Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act of 1990 [LIHPRA] is an important tool for maintaining this scarce resource. I appreciate your bill's

provision of a structure for continuing a modified capital grant-capital loan program for housing preservation activities under the existing LIHPRHA program.

As you are aware, there are almost 30,000 low-income rental units in 37 States that have been approved by HUD and are awaiting funding through this program. This represents a critical need for preservation of the existing stock, particularly in tight rental markets. In low vacancy rate areas, tenant-based rental assistance is often ineffective in meeting the housing needs of deserving low-income Americans. In New York City, for example, housing development and land acquisition costs are high and production of new affordable housing is very limited. Therefore, retaining the current housing stock is a cost-efficient and desirable means of meeting shelter needs.

Mr. BOND. Thank you for your remarks. It is my full intention to work with you to improve the LIHPRHA program. It is this subcommittee's desire to ensure that a cost-effective approach to preserving our much needed housing is adequately funded. I am especially concerned about the detrimental effects of the loss of stock on areas of the country with low vacancy rates.

Mr. D'AMATO. I thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment. I appreciate your willingness to continue this dialog and look forward to working with you throughout conference committee action to resolve this significant housing crisis in a fair and equitable manner.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to discuss several other projects that currently are funded in the House version. I am hopeful these will get full consideration by the conference committee, and be included in the final bill.

Mr. President, I believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that Federal research and its subsequent data is shared, whenever possible, with the taxpayers who fund these research programs. To this end, I would like to state my support for the \$5.8 million provided in the House bill to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's [NASA] Commercial Technology Program. These funds would be used to support existing successful program goals, as well as new initiatives to link businesses from distressed communities to NASA commercial technologies.

It is critical to the competitiveness of our economy that we promote the shared use of research material between Federal agencies such as NASA and the private sector. Support for this program is an important step in that direction. The program will allow highly successful outreach efforts such as the NASA Lewis Business and Industry Summit to be carried forward and will help to ensure NASA Lewis' long-term viability as an economic force in northeastern Ohio.

Mr. President, I also believe it is our responsibility to use the success of

Federal investments in technology to improve, whenever feasible, our education system. Therefore I hope the conferees will agree with the House Appropriation Committee's decision to increase NASA's Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and Aerospace Academy [SEMAA] and Mobile Aeronautics Education Laboratory [MAEL] programs \$3.3 million. This increase would enable the NASA Lewis Research Center and Cuyahoga Community College to expand their already successful programs to the Cuyahoga Community College's western campus. In addition, the workstations included in the Mobile Aeronautics Education Laboratory can be replicated in Cleveland area schools.

Mr. President, as we are all too well aware, flooding disasters tragically struck the Midwest this past spring. While there is little we can do to prevent natural disasters, we must take every step possible to respond to these disasters in order to minimize potential loss of life and property. I sincerely hope the conferees will agree with the House Appropriations Committee's decision to provide \$5 million to support the replacement and upgrading of outdated Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] emergency response equipment. Upgraded, functional equipment is critical to protecting our citizens from unfortunate natural disasters and I strongly believe safety issues such as the support of this equipment should be a priority in our budget discussions. I specifically believe the mobile emergency response support and mobile air transportable telecommunications deserve particular attention.

Mr. President, I note the presence on the floor of my good friend from Missouri, Senator BOND, chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on VA-HUD. I would hope that he, and the Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, will give serious consideration to the programs I described.

Mr. BOND. I thank the Senator from Ohio for his statement. I have listened very carefully to his remarks and I recognize his concern for the two programs he mentioned. As the Senator is aware, the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee had to respond to a vast number of requests with a limited pool of resources to do it. The Senator from Ohio has raised very compelling arguments and I will carefully consider his request during the conference committee deliberations.

Mr. DEWINE. I thank my distinguished friend, and I yield the floor.

YOUTHBUILD

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I would like to commend my friend, Senator KIT BOND for his efforts as chairman of the VA-HUD Subcommittee to include \$35 million in funding for the Youthbuild program. This innovative and successful program allows disadvantaged and at-risk youth to acquire educational and job skills and develop leadership abilities within their communities. In the process, the pro-

gram helps to develop and rehabilitate physically distressed housing in order to provide decent, safe and affordable housing opportunities to low and moderate-income families.

I also note that the subcommittee has instructed HUD to provide a priority in funding for program applicants that demonstrate an ability to leverage private and nonprofit funding. In this era of limited Federal funding, it is essential that our program dollars are stretched to the maximum extent possible. I fully support this important provision and believe it will result in a greater benefit for each Federal dollar provided and a greater amount of local community coordination and decision-making.

I would like to bring one particular organization to the attention of the chairman and the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI. The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. [Restoration] located in central Brooklyn has a 30-year legacy of economic development, job creation, and community building. Restoration currently operates an education and job training initiative, known as Career Path, which assists economically disadvantaged young adults, ages 16-24, to become productive members of the community by providing education and developing employment, citizenship, and leadership skills.

I note that the Restoration Corp. has an outstanding record of successfully leveraging local, State, and private funding through private charities, foundation support, corporate sponsorship, and a variety of private fundraising efforts. One such effort recently resulted in Restoration receiving a 5 year \$1.75 million grant from Cablevision, Inc. I believe Restoration's Career Path initiative represents a successful model which leverages private funding, invests in our youth and helps to revitalize the stock of affordable housing.

By helping to fund Restoration's Career Path initiative, HUD can help to restore economic viability to the neighborhoods of central Brooklyn and assist at-risk young adults to become active and productive members of the community. Once again, I would express my appreciation and support for Senator BOND's continuing efforts to support successful housing and economic development initiatives.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my friend Senator ALFONSE D'AMATO for his support of our efforts to fund and improve the operation of existing HUD programs. The subcommittee is fully aware of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. and its 30-year legacy of economic and cultural development in New York. I am confident that the Career Path initiative will receive a full and fair consideration from HUD in any future competition under the Youthbuild program.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I see my friend from Missouri, the chairman of the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, on the floor and would like

to call to his attention an important project in Ohio that I believe is deserving of funding under the Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] Program. Specifically, I am interested in the economic development initiative funding for various community development projects. A number were listed by the committee in its report on the bill. I am very interested in a community-wide effort in Lorain, OH, to convert a soon-to-be-closed hospital into a community resource center. This is an area that is economically depressed, and in addition to the economic losses associated with the closure of the hospital, the community recently discovered that the local Ford production plant will soon be closing its doors. Would the Senator from Missouri agree that an initiative which attempted to convert the hospital space into a community resource and training center be a worthy candidate for funding under the committee's EDI provision?

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Ohio raising this issue. I agree with him that the project he has described in Lorain would appear to be well-suited for the EDI program.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his comments. Were it not for the fact that the hospital is scheduled to close at the end of the year, I would be content to seek funding for this project through traditional funding channels. However, the hospital is set to close in just a few months. Therefore, I have little choice but to request that the chairman of the subcommittee take a very close look at this project as he proceeds to conference with the House on the final version of this appropriations bill. Specifically, what I am seeking is consideration for support of funds to allow for renovation and conversion of this space. What I am trying to avoid is seeing this hospital close and having this wonderful facility stand empty. Should this happen, I am concerned that it stands vulnerable to deterioration, and even vandalism, to a point that the only option left for the community is to tear down the structure.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I understand the Senator from Ohio's concerns, and commend him for his efforts to seek a positive solution. As I am sure he well knows, this has been a difficult year for community development projects, such as the one he has discussed. All the same, I am impressed by the overall project, ranging from job training to child care to community service activities. I will give the Senator's request all due consideration as we go to conference on this bill. Is that satisfactory to the Senator?

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, that is satisfactory and I thank the distinguished chairman for his willingness to work with me and the members of the Ohio congressional delegation, as well as the community of Lorain to turn the closure of the hospital into a new,

positive beginning for the people of Lorain.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies has included funding for economic development initiatives in S. 1034. I am pleased that the committee report mentions a worthy project at the University of San Francisco that will provide important economic development in international business opportunities for this campus.

In the weeks ahead, I will be working with my colleagues in the Senate and House, as well as with Secretary Cuomo and his staff at HUD, to secure funds for the Center for International Business Education at the University of San Francisco, a model program for training and international commerce, environmental management and business ethics. The EDI funds would play an important role in promoting economic vitality in northern California. The center will provide jobs at home and abroad, while enhancing America's international economic competitiveness. EDI funding will assist in renovation of critical facilities and completion of a distance learning facility, while adding new programs for an important program initiative.

I thank Chairman BOND and Senator MIKULSKI for recognizing this worthy project.

AMENDMENT NO. 930

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, last Thursday Senator HATCH and myself, along with Senators LEAHY and DURBIN, offered an amendment to the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill that would delink Federal judicial pay raises from those of the Congress and senior level executive branch officials. Our amendment, which was accepted without objection, will allow judges' salaries to be adjusted automatically on an annual basis. I am pleased that it is part of the measure that will pass the Senate today.

For too many years, Congress has refused to take the political heat for accepting pay raises, and held judicial salaries hostage in the process. This congressional scheme of hiding behind judicial robes has created a tremendous financial gulf between Federal judges and the lawyers who come before them. The likelihood that this salary gap will only get worse is driving some of our best jurists from the Federal bench and making it increasingly difficult to attract top-quality replacements. Such a talent drain threatens the quality of American justice at a time when our already overburdened courts need our best and most experienced legal minds.

The numbers offer their own warning. Between 1960 and 1970, only three Federal judges resigned. But since 1980 more than 50 judges have left the bench early, many citing inadequate compensation as the reason. Indeed, a study several years ago by the American Bar Association estimated that more than one-fourth of the Nation's Federal judges may quit their jobs.

While this exodus grows, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract the

best and the brightest to Federal judicial service. Judicial candidates can clearly see the ink fading on their checkbooks. Many say they want to serve the public, but they just can't afford it.

The solution to this problem is simple, and by delinking judicial pay raises, the Senate today takes an important step toward ensuring that this situation will not be repeated. I am hopeful and optimistic that we can retain this provision when we conference the measure with the House.

Mr. President, we in Congress have taken the opportunity to show our commitment to fairness. We have recognized the mistake Congress made 20 years ago when it tied its own salary increases to those of Federal judges. This backdoor way of securing congressional pay raises hasn't worked. But by this amendment we have freed the hostages, the Nation's Federal judges, and helped to ensure the continued high quality of America's judicial system.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern that funding for the Community Development Financial Institutions [CDFI] Fund has not been included in the VA/HUD appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998.

The CDFI Fund is an economic development initiative that was adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support several years ago. The program is an important investment tool for economically distressed communities. Overall, Senator BOND and Senator MIKULSKI have done an excellent job of producing a bill which makes the most of the limited funding available. However, by not funding CDFI, I believe the committee has missed the opportunity to make a substantial and cost-effective investment in our distressed communities.

CDFI leverages private investment to stretch every Federal dollar. The VA/ HUD appropriations bill reported by the House Appropriations Committee includes the \$125 million requested by the President for this valuable program. Senator MIKULSKI has discussed her intention to revisit the issue of CDFI funding in conference. I too believe the CDFI Program deserves the opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness in bringing economic development resources to distressed communities. I look forward to working with Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BOND during conference to restore funding for this program.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. 1034, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and independent agencies appropriations bill for 1998.

This bill provides new budget authority of \$91.5 billion and new outlays of \$52.6 billion to finance the programs of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, and other independent agencies.

I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for producing a bill that, with adoption of the manager's amendment, is within the subcommittee's revised 602(b) allocation. This is one of the most difficult bills to manage with its varied programs and challenging allocation, but I think the bill meets most of the demands made of it while staying under budget and is a strong candidate for enactment, so I

commend my friend the chairman for his efforts and leadership.

When outlays from prior-year budget authority [BA] and other adjustments are taken into account, the bill totals \$90.7 billion in BA and \$99.8 billion in outlays. The total bill is at the Senate subcommittee's 602(b) nondefense allocation for budget authority and outlays. The subcommittee is also under its defense allocation by \$1 million in BA.

I ask members of the Senate to refrain from offering amendments which would cause the subcommittee to exceed its budget allocation and urge the speedy adoption of this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be inserted in the RECORD.

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

S. 1034, VA-HUD APPROPRIATIONS, 1998—SPENDING COMPARISONS, SENATE-REPORTED BILL [Fiscal year 1998, In millions of dollars]

	Defense	Nondefense	Crime	Mandatory	Total
Senate-reported bill:					
Budget authority	128	69,263		21,332	90,723
Outlays	128	79,561		20,061	99,750
Senate 602(b) allocation:					
Budget authority	129	60,065		21,332	81,526
Outlays	128	76,154		20,061	96,343
President's request:					
Budget authority	129	76,965		21,332	98,426
Outlays	128	80,313		20,061	100,502
House-passed bill:					
Budget authority	128	69,823		21,332	91,283
Outlays	128	80,403		20,061	100,592
SENATE-REPORTED BILL COMPARED TO:					
Senate 602(b) allocation:					
Budget authority	(1)	9,198			9,197
Outlays		3,407			3,407
President's request:					
Budget authority	(1)	(7,702)			(7,703)
Outlays		(752)			(752)
House-passed bill:					
Budget authority		(560)			(560)
Outlays		(842)			(842)

Note.—Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Totals adjusted for consistency with current scorekeeping conventions.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise to support the VA-HUD appropriations bill. Chairman BOND, a former colleague of mine on the Banking Committee, and Senator MIKULSKI, the ranking member and my good friend from Maryland, both have a deep understanding of the importance of housing programs that are so crucial to creating safe, decent, and affordable housing for the American people. I want to thank them for their hard work.

The committee did a good job of juggling many competing needs and interests that go far beyond housing programs. I want to recognize their good work in both appropriating enough funds to renew expiring section 8 contracts and in adopting the mark-to-market legislation passed as part of the reconciliation bill but unfortunately dropped in conference. This legislation, sponsored by Senators MACK, D'AMATO, BOND, and others addresses what Secretary Cuomo calls the biggest crisis facing HUD in a way that saves money and ensures the long-term preservation of the section 8 housing stock.

We have worked very hard on a bipartisan basis in a short period of time to iron out differences with HUD on the section 8 legislation. It is my hope that, as the appropriations bill moves forward, the committee will adopt the agreements we reached with HUD which will make the program easier to implement and generally more efficient. Solving this problem will rank as one of our best accomplishments for this Congress and I again want to thank the chairman and ranking member for their interest and dedication in putting the section 8 housing program

on a sound financial and management footing.

Unfortunately, while these efforts on the section 8 portfolio should bear real fruit, the committee has been forced to try to squeeze too many high-priority programs into too small a box. There is simply not enough money in this bill to address the overall housing needs we face in this country.

For example, consider the public housing funding. While public housing has become a much-maligned program, this view is unwarranted. The vast majority of public housing is in good shape. Fewer than 100 of more than 3,300 public housing authorities [PHA's] are troubled. Public housing serves hundreds of thousands of elderly households and nearly 1½ million children. In many neighborhoods, public housing is indistinguishable from the privately owned housing that may be next door.

As in everything, problems do exist. There are bad housing projects and bad housing authorities. However, the Banking Committee is working on legislation that will require the Secretary to react quickly to put the bad PHA's in receivership and to demolish bad projects. We are also reforming the program to create more mixed-income communities and help make it possible for additional working families to get access to public and assisted housing. In fact, public housing represents about one-third of the housing stock affordable to minimum wage workers in this country. It is for this reason, among others, that Secretary Cuomo called public housing a precious resource.

While these reforms will contribute greatly to the overall health of the

public housing program, in order to succeed, public housing needs more funding. The bill before us provides \$2.9 billion for public housing operating subsidies, the same as this year. Operating subsidies are needed to cover the shortfall between what public housing authorities can collect in rent and what it costs to run the projects. I am pleased that the committee preserved this funding at current levels.

Even with the committee's best efforts, however, the \$2.9 billion covers only about 85 percent of what the PHA's need to pay for their day-to-day operations. We have put public housing authorities in a bind. They are asked to serve the poor, but not given the funding necessary to ensure that they can house the poor adequately. To close the gap, PHAs are forced to put off routine maintenance and small capital projects. In effect, the housing stock faces slow deterioration just so the housing authorities can pay the heating bill.

The capital account in this bill also stays steady at \$2.5 billion. These are much-needed funds, and again, I welcome the committee's effort to protect this crucial spending. But the fact is, the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing said that PHA's need \$4.5 billion per year for 10 years to take care of backlogged capital needs, in addition to keeping up with routine maintenance, which, by itself, costs \$1.7 billion annually.

This combination of low operating subsidies and inadequate capital funding means that we are slowly bleeding our public housing stock to death. All the hard work and good intentions of the committee cannot make up for the fact that the chairman and ranking

member were simply not given the allocation necessary to fund these crucial housing programs at necessary levels.

Similarly, homeless funding remains level in this bill, although homelessness, despite good progress, continues to be a serious problem. While economic growth is strong, it has not reached down to the people who live on the bottom rung of society's ladder. In fact, the Conference of Mayors estimates that homelessness increased by 5 percent last year. Moreover, as we try to make public and assisted housing more available to the working poor, a worthy goal that I support, we reduce the number of assisted housing units available to the very worst off in our country. In the end, this will mean more homelessness. In my view, Congress ought to recognize that truth and expand the homeless program.

One casualty of the fiscal constraints that the committee labored within is the Low Income Housing Preservation and Homeownership Act [LIHPRH], better known as the Preservation Program. This program has preserved over 80,000 units of affordable housing permanently. Another 30,000 units await funding. I urge the committee to work in conference to find some funding for this critical program. I know of the chairman's interest in accomplishing this goal, along with appropriate reforms to the program.

Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for all their hard work. I support this bill and urge my colleagues to do so, as well. I will continue to work for additional funding for housing programs, and look forward to the day when we are able to adequately address the many existing demands.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I wish to commend the managers of the Fiscal Year 1998 VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Appropriation Bill, Chairman BOND and Senator MIKULSKI, for their hard work in fashioning this measure, and for bringing it to the Floor in a timely manner. The bill appropriates \$90,901,535,000 for programs in Fiscal Year 1998, is within its 602(b) allocations, and is below the amount requested by the administration by about \$70,903,000.

Mr. President, I specifically commend the chairman and ranking member for taking an extremely tight 602(b) allocation and spreading it across the twenty-one agencies. There were also additional constraints posed by the budget agreement resolved to accomplish a unified Federal budget in fiscal year 2002.

This bill funds a diversity of agencies and programs. It is a challenge every year to develop a passable bill that addresses a variety of concerns from all Members of the Senate, the Federal agencies, and the American people.

Mr. President, this bill matches the President's request for Veterans Affairs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and

the National Science Foundation. The managers also protected several key programs in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, namely CDBG, HOME, and the McKinney Homeless programs. In addition, many cuts made in the proposed budget were restored. The highest priority was to adequately fund Veteran's medical programs, despite the proposed cut in the budget agreement. This bill matches the President's request for Veterans Medical Care, and restores the \$27 million cut in Veterans Medical Research.

Mr. President, I congratulate the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee, as well as their dedicated, hardworking staff: Andy Givens and Liz Blevins for the minority and John Kamarck, Carrie Apostolou, and Lashawnda Leftwich for the majority.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, in a few minutes we will vote on the VA-HUD appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998. I want to take this opportunity to thank the chairman, Senator BOND, and his staff for working with those of us on this side of the aisle in such a collegial way. I think the fact that we were able to finish this bill tonight says a lot about the bipartisan cooperation that we have received, or has occurred between both Senator BOND, myself, and the other Members of the U.S. Senate.

Today, I note that we had robust discussions on important policy matters. But if one would note, the whole tone was one of civility, consideration, and collegiality. I am very proud of the way this bill has moved.

I am also very proud of the substance in this bill. We have met compelling human need with veterans and the poor. We have stood sentry over the important issues related to the environment, protected consumers, and ensured that Arlington Cemetery would be as fit for duty as the brave people were who lie therein. And we have, at the same time, had a very serious issue addressed in the area of science and technology funding.

So veterans' health research that will be looking at issues related to both women's health and prostate cancer, to our important space program that shows it is the best in the world, to the National Science Foundation which is looking at how we can ensure that brilliant young investigators are going to be able to have the new ideas for the 21st century that are going to lead to new products says a lot about what this bill does.

I enjoy very much serving as the ranking member and my job is made

easier, more delightful, and gives me pride because of the cooperation of the majority, both its chairman and staff.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my own staff because it takes a lot of reviewing of a lot of line items when you have seven Cabinet-level agencies and 25 other independent agencies. I would like to thank Andy Givens, my chief clerk; David Bowers for his hard work, and our excellent detailee, Stacy Closson.

So as we move on to the rollcall vote, I again look forward to working with my very able chair in the conference and bringing a great conference report back to the Senate where we can continue the pride we feel as we vote on this bill tonight.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, let me very briefly express my sincere appreciation to my ranking member for her great cooperation. The expeditious way in which this measure was handled is something that is rather unusual for the VA-HUD bill. When she indicated she thought we could wrap this up today, I said I am a skeptic; I am from Missouri; I have to be shown. And thanks to the cooperation of all Senators we have been able to do it.

I really appreciate the cooperation of Senators on both sides. Senator MIKULSKI has been very effective. I would like to add my thanks to Andy Givens, to Stacy Closson and David Bowers, and particular thanks to my staff. This is the first time that Jon Kamarck has gone through this as the chief clerk. It is quite an experience. We appreciate the work he has done. We are delighted to have the steady hand of Carrie Apostolou guiding us on EPA, veterans, FEMA matters with great skill, and Sarah Horrigan has been a great addition on the NASA and science accounts, and I very much appreciate all of that assistance.

Mr. President, since I think many Members are anxious to get started on the vote, and I do not expect anyone will be disadvantaged, I will now ask unanimous consent that we begin the vote and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the House bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

A bill (H.R. 2158) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and for sundry independent agencies, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all after the enacting clause is stricken, the text of S. 1034 is inserted, and the bill is deemed read a third time.

The yeas and nays are requested. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The question is, Shall the bill pass? The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 194 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Abraham	Faircloth	Lott
Akaka	Feingold	Lugar
Allard	Feinstein	Mack
Ashcroft	Ford	McCain
Baucus	Frist	McConnell
Bennett	Glenn	Mikulski
Biden	Gorton	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Graham	Moynihan
Bond	Gramm	Murkowski
Boxer	Grams	Murray
Breaux	Grassley	Nickles
Brownback	Gregg	Reed
Bryan	Hagel	Reid
Bumpers	Harkin	Robb
Burns	Hatch	Roberts
Byrd	Helms	Rockefeller
Campbell	Hollings	Roth
Chafee	Hutchinson	Santorum
Cleland	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Inouye	Shelby
Collins	Jeffords	Smith (NH)
Conrad	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Coverdell	Kempthorne	Snowe
Craig	Kennedy	Specter
D'Amato	Kerrey	Stevens
Daschle	Kerry	Thomas
DeWine	Kohl	Thompson
Dodd	Landrieu	Thurmond
Domenici	Lautenberg	Torricelli
Dorgan	Leahy	Warner
Durbin	Levin	Wellstone
Enzi	Lieberman	Wyden

NAYS—1

Kyl

The bill (H.R. 2158), as amended, was passed.

[The text of H.R. 2158 will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.]

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. KERRY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate insist on its amendment and request a conference with the House, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate, and S. 1034 be placed back on the calendar.

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

There being no objection, the Chair appointed Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. BYRD conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I have already expressed appreciation to my staff, and particularly my ranking member. I want to make a special mention of my chief of staff, Julie Dammann, whose second child was due today and she stayed with us throughout the whole proceedings and wanted to see the VA-HUD bill delivered first. She has been an invaluable help in all legislative activities and helped us shepherd this through. So, a very special thank you, and best wishes to Julie, to Rolf and their other daughter, Monica. Again, I express my appreciation.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I would also echo the comments to Julie and her husband. I hope that she can go home, rest easy, put her feet up and we are looking forward to being the proud Godparents of Bond-Mikulski. Maybe we will name something after her in conference.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I don't know whether Mikulski-Dammann would be a good name for her, maybe, but it is one we can always offer, to show a little diversity.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

RETIREMENT OF MARK LACOVARA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to recognize the work of Mr. Mark Lacovara, who has retired after more than 27 years' employment in the Senate.

Mark came to the Senate in 1969 as a reference assistant in the Senate Library and has since served in various capacities with the Official Reporters of Debates, the Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary of the Senate, and administrative services. The position from which he leaves us is that of assistant Journal clerk.

To those of us who are a part of the Senate, Mark's regard for this institution is well-known and highly valued. Such dedication is no doubt rooted in his early years. Mark grew up in the Washington, DC, area and observed his father, the late John Lacovara, in service as the Senate's Republican Deputy Sergeant at Arms. Mark began employment with the Senate as a young man of 18. As he worked, he also earned a college degree and served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Mark has been committed to the best interests of the Senate and to the United States throughout his career. This is evident in both the quality of his work and his enthusiasm for it.

I want to thank Mark for his outstanding service in the U.S. Senate; we will miss him. I'm certain my colleagues join me in expressing appreciation and in wishing him well.

THE RETIREMENT OF JOHN "MARK" LACOVARA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, an individual with over 27 years of dedicated service to the U.S. Senate has retired. This conscientious and hard working individual is John "Mark" Lacovara, the assistant Journal clerk of the Senate.

Mark, a native-born Washingtonian, has served in numerous capacities in the Senate over the past 27 years. During those years of service, Mark com-

pleted his college education and earned a degree from the University of Maryland.

In March, 1969, Mark began his Senate service as a reference assistant in the Senate Library. Shortly thereafter, he moved to a doorkeeper position at the pass desk under the auspices of the Senate Sergeant at Arms. From the doorkeeper's position, Mark had the opportunity to return to work for the Secretary of the Senate as a clerk in the Senate stationery room.

In 1974, Mark was appointed clerk of enrolled bills on the legislative staff of the Secretary. In 1979, Mark was named second assistant Journal clerk, and by 1984 was working as editor of morning business for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

In his capacity as morning business editor, Mark had the responsibility of producing, compiling, and formatting copy for the Morning Business section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This section includes Presidential messages, House messages, Executive communications, petitions and memorials, committee reports, the introduction of legislation, as well as additional statements. Anyone who takes a look at the RECORD will get a notion of the responsibility of the morning business editor.

As I mentioned earlier, Mark once served as second assistant Journal clerk. In 1993, Mark returned to that office in the capacity of assistant Journal clerk, where he remained until his retirement.

Often referred to as the "bible" of the Senate, the Journal reflects the official legal record of Senate proceedings. An individual with the responsibility of making the entries plays a critical role in the history of the Senate. Mark served in exemplary fashion as assistant Journal clerk, and took great pride in his work.

Mark loved the Senate. He served here with distinction. He believed in the Senate as a great institution and throughout his long service demonstrated his loyalty and dedication.

Mr. President, I say to Mark, thank you for your long and distinguished service. You will be missed.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, July 21, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,363,682,543,589.87. (Five trillion, three hundred sixty-three billion, six hundred eighty-two million, five hundred forty-three thousand, five hundred eighty-nine dollars and eighty-seven cents)

Five years ago, July 21, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$3,982,450,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred eighty-two billion, four hundred fifty million)

Ten years ago, July 21, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,314,700,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fourteen billion, seven hundred million)

Fifteen years ago, July 21, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,084,261,000,000.