

Rules and Administration will meet in SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building, on Wednesday, July 30 and Thursday, July 31, 1997 at 2:30 p.m. each day to hold a business meeting on the status of the investigation into the contested Senate election in Louisiana.

For further information concerning this hearing, please contact Bruce Kasold of the Rules Committee staff at 224-3448.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry will hold a full committee hearing on Thursday, September 4, 1997, at 9 a.m., in SR-328A. The purpose of this hearing is to examine rural and agricultural credit issues.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee Special Investigation to meet on Monday, July 28, at 2 p.m. for a nomination hearing on George Omas to be Commissioner, Postal Rate Commission, and Janice Lachance, to be Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management.

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

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee Special Investigation to meet on Monday, July 28, at 4:30 p.m. for a closed hearing on campaign finance related matters.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be permitted to meet on July 28, 1997 at 1 p.m. for the purpose of a hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, TERRORISM, AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Mr. COVERDELL. The Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, will hold a hearing on Monday, July 28, 1997, at 9:30 a.m. in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building, on "The Atlanta Olympics Bombing and the FBI Interrogation of Richard Jewell."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, TERRORISM, AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information, of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, July 28, 1997,

at 2 P.M. to hold a hearing in room 226, Senate Dirksen Building, on: "S. 474, the Internet Gambling Prohibition Act."

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE SEUVA'AI MERE TUIASOSOPO-BETHAM

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, it was a sad day in our Nation's history, and more significantly, to its southernmost territory in the South Pacific, the islands of Tutuila and Manu'a known also as American Samoa, when a grand lady, a woman of great courage, a long-time educator, passed away peacefully in Honolulu, HI, on June 13, 1997. She was the late Hon. Seuva'ai Mere Tuiasosopo-Betham, former associate judge of the high court of American Samoa and former director of the American Samoa Department of Education. She was 65 years of age.

"Mere" as she was popularly known, was born to the late High Chief Orator Mariota Tiualu Tuiasosopo I of Vatia who was one of the signatories of the Deed of Cession between the islands of Tutuila and Manu'a and the United States of America in 1900. Her mother was the late Venise Pulefa'asisina-Tuiasosopo of the village of Amanave. During the islands' naval administration in 1950, Mere graduated as the only female out of 16 students in the first graduating class of the Amerika Samoa High School. High Chief Orator Tuiasosopo, a staunch educator and an influential person in Mere's life, who firmly believed in the vast opportunities offered by the new mother country, encouraged his daughter to study abroad. She attended Geneva College in Pennsylvania and experienced the lessons of life to persevere and be disciplined while thousands of miles away from her home in the South Pacific.

After becoming one of the first Samoans ever to successfully complete college in 1954 and earning her teaching credentials, Mere returned to Samoa upon her parents wishes and delved into education, becoming one of the first teachers in the American Samoan educational system. Over four decades, Mere dedicated her life to the teaching of Samoan students. She began as a classroom teacher, then an adviser, a vice principal, a principal, and eventually rose to the prestigious position of assistant director of the Department of Education at a time when very few Samoans held administrative positions in government and the territory's chief executive was still appointed by the Secretary of Interior. In 1978, when American Samoa elected its first Samoan Governor, Mere was appointed as the first Samoan female to hold a cabinet office serving as director of the Education Department.

Since the inception of formal education in American Samoa, Mere's

name has been synonymous with its development. She initiated the local capacity building concept that involved efforts for staff development and the bilingual/bicultural education which consolidated the best in both Samoan and Western curricula. Her local capacity building grew out of the need to upgrade the total teaching force in American Samoa which was nearly 90 percent Samoan. She once said, that,

... for every child to be able to learn well, he must be taught well ... our people are our greatest and only valuable natural resource, it is imperative that we invest heavily in their development at all levels. In doing so, we invest in our country's future stability, growth, health and security.

Inherent in Mere's insistence on local capacity building was her conviction that the only way citizens in a developing country like Samoa can ensure their survival amidst the influxes of the Western world, was to remain the masters of their land and development, and continue to reaffirm confidence in their ability to determine their own destiny. It is also the mechanism, she believed, the Samoan culture and American democracy could merge enabling Samoans to continue to live in peace and harmony.

Mere's conceptualization, development, and materialization of the bilingual/bicultural educational system of American Samoa was an innovative approach to reconcile the fervent desire of Samoans to maintain their identity as a cultural entity while educating their people to meet the demands of the Western world. She held this notion for nearly 40 years and firmly ingrained it in all of her students, many of whom attest to the immense influence this great Samoan lady has had in their lives.

Mrs. Betham received numerous awards as a leading educator in the Pacific. She received the Samoan Educator of the Year award presented to her by former U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Terrell H. Bell. He thanked her for her efforts to improve educational opportunities in the Pacific Basin saying, "Progress in education (reform) depends most of all on the activities of leaders in each of our states and territories, and your example to the people of American Samoa has been bright * * *"

In 1991, Mere was appointed to the all-male high court of American Samoa which included seven Samoan associate judges who dealt mainly with land and "matai" [chieftain] title laws. Her wisdom and knowledge of the "fa'a-Samoa" [Samoan culture] was fiercely sought by many of the territory's leaders to help preserve the integrity and uniqueness of their Samoan heritage at the same time dispensing American justice. As part of the criteria of being an associate judge, Mere was initiated into her village's "Nu'u o Ali'i," the council of chiefs, traditionally all-male in most Samoan villages. She was bestowed the Talking Chief title "Seuva'ai," descriptive of one surging

forward with determination but cognizant of her native surroundings and what the benefits will be to everyone.

Mere epitomized the true legacy of an educator, who throughout her lifetime set precedents for Samoan people and especially for Pacific island women, teaching by example. As her island home developed under the guidance of the United States of America for almost a century now, she never forgot her role as an educated Samoan to maintain her indigenous culture.

Judge Betham is survived by her husband of over 40 years, James "Rusty" M. Betham, five of her six children, five grandchildren, her 83-year-old mother-in-law, a number of brothers and sisters, and a large extended family in her native Samoa and the world over. She will be missed by all those who knew and loved her.●

THOMAS BROS. GRASS, LTD.

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Thomas Bros. Grass, Ltd., being named Entrepreneur of the Year by the Dallas Business Journal. Thomas Bros. began in the 1970's, with 10 acres of undeveloped land and a dream. E.A. Thomas and his four sons Ike, Mark, Mike, and Emory, took those 10 acres and started a small business with the desire to produce a wide variety of quality sod for golf courses, athletic fields, and residential properties. Over the years, that small sod farm has blossomed into a successful 2,000-acre family-owned business, with sod operations in three States.

While their headquarters are located in Texas, Thomas Bros. has two sod farms in my home State of Tennessee. The farms in Taft and Nashville have not only strengthened the economies of these communities, they have brought with them the Thomas family spirit of teamwork and community well-being. Not only are they well established as experts in sod production and installation, they have achieved a reputation for quality and efficient service. That reputation makes them standouts in their field, and has earned the family work in major arenas throughout the country, like the Cotton Bowl in Dallas and the Kansas City Chiefs football club.

Mr. President, Thomas Bros.' team approach and home grown commitment to customer satisfaction has certainly benefited the State of Tennessee and is worthy of this recognition as Entrepreneur of the Year. I congratulate them and wish them continued success in future endeavors.●

REAUTHORIZING THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG USER FEE PROGRAM AND CERTAIN FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION REFORMS

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I strongly urge my colleagues to support S. 830, the FDA Modernization and Accountability Act.

This bill deserves support for one primary reason. It preserves the FDA's es-

sential mission of validating the safety and effectiveness of new drugs and medical devices, while encouraging innovation and the commercialization of new, life-saving therapies.

This bill is the result of much debate, and tremendous consensus building over the last two Congresses. I'm proud to have played some part in this as a Member of both the House and the Senate, having introduced more than 2 years ago H.R. 1472, the FDA Modernization Act of 1995, which contains several of the key ingredients of the legislation before us today.

From the time we get up in the morning until the time we go to bed at night, we live, work, eat, and drink in a world of products affected by FDA decisionmaking.

Perhaps no other Federal agency has such a broad impact in the daily lives of average Americans.

Food handling and commercial preparation often occurs under the agency's scrutiny. Over-the-counter drugs and nutritional supplements, from vitamins to aspirin, also are certified by the agency.

Life-saving drugs for treatment of cancer, autoimmune deficiency, and other dread diseases are held to its rigorous approval standards.

Medical devices ranging from the simple to the complex, from tongue depressors to computerized diagnostic equipment, must meet FDA quality standards.

These products overseen by the FDA are woven deeply into the fabric of our daily lives, and the agency's twin missions of certifying their safety and effectiveness is supported by the vast majority of Americans.

Yet, balancing those missions against the time and expense required by manufacturers to navigate the FDA approval system has been difficult and controversial. In the last Congress, radical transformation of the agency, even ending the agency as we know it and replacing it with a panel of private-sector, expert entrepreneurs, became a goal of some.

At the very least, reforming the FDA at the beginning of the 104th Congress looked to be an exercise fraught with partisan political turmoil, and destined for gridlock.

But while there was focus on the extreme ends of the argument, those folks arguing for no changes against members demanding wholesale dismemberment of the agency, a broader, bipartisan middle developed.

And with the help of Vice President's GORE's Reinventing Government Program, Members of Congress from both political parties developed practical, bipartisan solutions to the critical process and management problems in the FDA approval process.

I sought to mobilize this bipartisan movement with H.R. 1472 introduced in June 1995. Some in my own party thought I had gone to far, too fast. But I am gratified that many of the elements of that legislation have been re-

tained and strengthened in the legislation and managers amendment we expect to have before us this week.

These include: It streamlines approval systems for biotechnology product manufacturing; it allows approval of important, new breakthrough drugs on the basis of a single, clinically valid trial; it creates a collaborative mechanism allowing applicants to confer constructively with the FDA at critical points in the approval process; it sets reasonable but strict timeframes for approval decisionmaking; it reduces the paperwork and reporting burden now facing manufacturers when they make minor changes in their manufacturing process; it establishes provisions for allowing third-party review of applications at the discretion of the Secretary; and it allows manufacturers to distribute scientifically valid information on uses for approved drugs and devices which may not yet be certified by the FDA.

I am especially pleased that Senators MACK, FRIST, DODD, BOXER, KENNEDY, and I could offer the provisions of this legislation relating to the dissemination of information on off-label uses of approved products.

This provision will allow manufacturers to distribute scientifically and clinically valid information on such uses following a review by the FDA, including a decision by the agency which may require additional balancing material be added to the packet.

Here's why that's important: Manufacturers with an approved drug for ovarian cancer may have important, but not yet conclusive information from new trials that their drug also may reduce brain or breast cancers. That data, while perhaps not yet of a grade to meet supplemental labeling approval, may be important for an end-stage breast cancer patient whose doctor has exhausted all other treatments.

That doctor, and her patient, has the absolute right to that information.

This legislation will save lives, not sacrifice them.

It will mean that more doctors and their patients will have meaningful access to life-saving information about drugs that treat dread diseases like AIDS and cancer.

It will mean that biologic products will have a swifter passage through an approval process which no longer will require unnecessarily difficult demands with regard to the size of a start-up manufacturing process.

It will mean that break-through drugs which offer relief from, or cures of deadly disease for which there is no approved therapy will get into the marketplace earlier, on the basis of a special expedited approval system.

But legislation, indeed laws, are only words on paper.

Mr. President, we must also have a new FDA Commissioner who is as committed to these changes as former Commissioner David Kessler was committed to the war on teenage smoking.

The pharmaceutical industry is a robust, risk-taking, technology-driven