

I am appalled at the treatment that Margaret Morrow has received before the Senate and have spoken about her on the Senate floor on many occasions. It is long past time for the Senate to take up this nomination, debate it and vote on it. In my view, the Senate should certainly have done so before adjourning for a month-long recess.

Margaret Morrow was the first woman President of the California Bar Association and also a past president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. She is an exceptionally well-qualified nominee who is currently a partner at Arnold & Porter and has practiced for 23 years. She is supported by Los Angeles' Republican Mayor Richard Riordan and by Robert Bonner, the former head of DEA under a Republican Administration. Representative JAMES ROGAN attended her second confirmation hearing to endorse her.

Margaret Morrow has devoted her career to the law, to getting women involved in the practice of law and to making lawyers more responsive and responsible. Her good works should not be punished but commended. Her public service ought not be grounds for delay. She does not deserve this treatment. This type of treatment will drive good people away from government service.

The President of the Woman Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, the President of the Women's Legal Defense Fund, the President of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, the President of the National Conference of Women's Bar Association and other distinguished attorneys from the Los Angeles area have all written the Senate in support of the nomination of Margaret Morrow. They write that: "Margaret Morrow is widely respected by attorneys, judges and community leaders of both parties" and she "is exactly the kind of person who should be appointed to such a position and held up as an example to young women across the country." I could not agree more.

Mr. President, the Senate should move expeditiously to confirm Margaret Morrow.

I ask unanimous consent that the two letters to which I have referred be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

There being no objection, the letters were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 14, 1997.

Hon. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The President,
The White House, Washington, DC.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,
The Majority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT AND MR. MAJORITY LEADER: Among the constitutional responsibilities entrusted to the President and the Senate, none is more essential to the foundation upon which our democracy rests than the appointment of justices and judges to serve at all levels of the federal bench. Notwithstanding the intensely political nature of the process, historically this critical duty has been carried out with bipartisan coopera-

tion to ensure a highly qualified and effective federal judiciary.

There is a looming crisis in the Nation brought on by the extraordinary number of vacant federal judicial positions and the resulting problems that are associated with delayed judicial appointments. There are 102 pending judicial vacancies, or 11 percent of the number of authorized judicial positions. A record 24 of these Article III positions have been vacant for more than 18 months. Those courts hardest hit are among the Nation's busiest, for example, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has 9 of its 28 positions vacant. At the district court level, six States have unusually high vacancy rates: 10 in California, 8 in Pennsylvania, 6 in New York, 5 in Illinois, and 4 each in Texas and Louisiana.

The injustice of this situation for all of society cannot be overstated. Dangerously crowded dockets, suspended civil case dockets, burgeoning criminal caseloads, overburdened judges, and chronically undermanned courts undermine our democracy and respect for the supremacy of law.

We, the undersigned representatives of national legal organizations, call upon the President and the Senate to devote the time and resources necessary to expedite the selection and confirmation process for federal judicial nominees. We respectfully urge all participants in the process to move quickly to resolve the issues that have resulted in these numerous and longstanding vacancies in order to preserve the integrity of our justice system.

N. LEE COOPER,
President, American
Bar Association.

U. LAWRENCE BOZE,
President, National
Bar Association.

HUGO CHAVAINO,
President, Hispanic
National Bar Association.

PAUL CHAN,
President, National
Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

HOWARD TWIGGS,
President, Association
of Trial Lawyers of
America.

SALLY LEE FOLEY,
President, National
Association of
Women Lawyers.

JULIET GEE,
President, National
Conference of Women's Bar Associations.

WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
OF LOS ANGELES,
Los Angeles, CA, May 13, 1997.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: We write to you to protest the treatment which one of President Clinton's nominees for the Federal District Court is receiving. We refer to Margaret Morrow, who has been nominated for the United States District Court in the Central District of California. As of today we have been waiting a full year for her confirmation.

Margaret Morrow has qualifications which set her apart as one uniquely qualified to be a federal judge. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Bryn Mawr College and a cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School. She has a 23-year career in private practice with an emphasis in complicated commercial and corporate litigation with extensive experi-

ence in federal courts. She has received a long list of awards and recognition as a top lawyer in her field, her community and her state.

Margaret Morrow is widely respected by attorneys, judges and community leaders of both parties. Many have written to you. Because of her outstanding qualifications and broad support, it is difficult to understand why she has not moved expeditiously through the confirmation process.

Margaret Morrow is a leader and role model among women lawyers in California. She was the second woman President of 25,000 member Los Angeles Bar Association and the first woman President of the largest mandatory bar association in the country, the 150,000 member State Bar of California.

Margaret Morrow is exactly the kind of person who should be appointed to such a position and held up as an example to young women across our country. Instead she is subjected to multiple hearings and seemingly endless rounds of questions, apparently without good reason.

We urge you to send a message that exceptionally well qualified women who are community leaders should apply to the U.S. Senate for federal judgeships. We urge you to move her nomination to the Senate floor and to act quickly to confirm it.

NANCY HOFFMEIER ZAMORA,
Esq.,

President, Women
Lawyers Association
of Los Angeles.

JUDITH LICHTMAN, *Esq.,*
President, Women's
Legal Defense Fund.

KAREN NOBUMOTO, *Esq.,*
President, John M.
Langston Bar Association.

STEVEN NISSEN, *Esq.,*
Executive Director &
General Counsel,
Public Counsel.

SHELDON H. SLOAN, *Esq.,*
President, Los Angeles
County Bar Association.

ABBY LEIBMAN, *Esq.,*
Executive Director,
California Women's
Law Center.

JULIET GEE, *Esq.,*
President, National
Conference of Women's Bar Associations.

S. 625—THE AUTO CHOICE REFORM ACT OF 1997

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I am happy to join as a cosponsor to S. 625, the Auto Choice Reform Act of 1997. This bill enjoys wide bipartisan support for the choice that it offers every American when choosing car insurance. Under this bill, families and individuals will be able to exchange the right to bring certain lawsuits for a substantial savings on their automobile insurance. This bill will allow consumers the right to purchase a low-cost policy that will cover medical bills and lost wages but not pain and suffering damage claims. Those policies will also give the purchasers immunity from pain and suffering claims against them. The current State liability systems will remain intact as a choice for individuals who would prefer the freedom

to sue and be sued for pain and suffering damages.

American taxpayers stand to save a total of \$45 billion nationwide. This savings would go directly in the pocket of every insured person at no cost to the taxpayers. The Joint Economic Committee has projected that the auto choice option will save Oklahomans \$420 million in automobile insurance premiums and will put \$186 back into the accounts of every person with a car. This is the equivalent of an instant tax cut for every insured person.

The New York Times stated that with this bill: "Everyone would win—except the lawyers" that live off of the current liability system. In fact, trial lawyers take in an estimated \$17 billion a year from auto accident cases. USA Today reported that 35 cents of every auto premium dollar goes to lawyers.

This bill has been labeled a "model of federalism." Each State has the right to opt out of auto choice if the State insurance commissioner finds that residents fail to receive at least a 30 percent reduction in bodily injury premiums. The State legislature retains the right to simply pass a law against this option and keep its current auto liability system.

There is mounting evidence that the current auto liability insurance system has become prey to rampant fraud and abuse, which is constantly fed by inflated pain and suffering claims. FBI Director Louis Freeh estimated that the average household pays an additional \$200 in unnecessary premiums just to cover these fraudulent schemes. This hits low income families particularly hard since about one-third of a family's disposable income is consumed by car insurance costs. Auto choice will put that money back into the pockets of taxpayers to help pay for needed expenses, providing long-overdue relief to all who choose this option.

I am happy to cosponsor this bill and hope that every American with car insurance will be given the opportunity to make this choice to provide long over due relief to all who choose this option. It is time for all drivers to begin to enjoy lower auto premiums and to allow government to spend its resources outside of the courtroom.

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER PARKING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 85, S. 797.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 797) to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize the design and construction of additions to the parking garage and certain site improvements, and for other purposes.

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

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

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am delighted that the Senate is considering S. 797, the John F. Kennedy Center Parking Improvement Act. This legislation, which will help to address parking and security problems at the Kennedy Center, was approved unanimously by the Committee On Environment and Public Works on June 5 of this year. I want to recognize the bill's cosponsors, Senators LOTT, BAUCUS, STEVENS, and KENNEDY, for their valuable assistance.

Briefly, Mr. President, this legislation provides authority to the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees to construct an addition to the existing parking garage at each of the north and south ends of the Center. Importantly, the Congressional Budget Office, in their letter of June 11, 1997, wrote that there will be not Federal costs associated with the enactment of S. 797.

The garage project will be financed through the issuance of industrial revenue bonds which will be repaid entirely with revenue derived from operation of the expanded garage. The bill includes a provision explicitly prohibiting the use of appropriated funds for the purpose of constructing or financing the parking garage expansion.

Also included in the bill is authorization for the Center to take action on site modifications for the improvement of security on the site. The Center has conducted a complete security review, and among the recommendations are changes to the main approach and plaza. This legislation allows the Center to pursue site modifications for the protection of the building and its visitors. The authorization of appropriations for this work, the site improvements and modifications, is provided by existing law.

Consistent with the John F. Kennedy Center Act Amendments of 1994, the Center's plans for the garage expansion and other, related site improvements will be developed in close consultation with the Department of the Interior.

Mr. President, the legislation reflects the commitment of the Kennedy Center Trustees to continually improve this Presidential monument for the benefit of the public—in a manner that is financially responsible. I want to again thank Senators LOTT, BAUCUS, STEVENS, and KENNEDY, for their help in drafting this bill. I urge the Senate to adopt this legislation.

AMENDMENT NOS. 1048 THROUGH 1053, EN BLOC

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, the following requests have been agreed to on both sides. There are six amendments at the desk that have been cleared on both sides. They are as follows:

Nos. 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, and 1053.

I ask unanimous consent that these amendments be agreed to en bloc, the

bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that any statements relating to the amendments or bill appear at this point in the RECORD. I finally ask consent that the motion to reconsider the above action be laid upon the table.

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

The amendments (Nos. 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, and 1053) agreed to en bloc are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1048

Page 3, line 7, strike "or".

Page 3, line 12, strike the first period and all that follows and insert "; or".

Page 3, after line 12, insert the following:

"(C) any project to acquire large screen format equipment for an interpretive theater or to produce an interpretive film that the Board specifically designates will be financed using sources other than appropriated funds."

Page 4, strike lines 9 through 14.

Page 4, line 15, strike "5" and insert "4".

AMENDMENT NO. 1049

(Purpose: To provide for the design, construction, furnishing, and equipping of a Center for Performing Arts within the complex known as the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center, and for other purposes)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ CONSTRUCTION OF A CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States has an enriched legacy of Hispanic influence in politics, government, economic development, and cultural expression.

(2) The Hispanic culture in what is now the United States can be traced to 1528 when a Spanish expedition from Cuba to Florida was shipwrecked on the Texas coast.

(3) The Hispanic culture in New Mexico can be traced to 1539 when a Spanish Franciscan Friar, Marcos de Niza, and his guide, Estevanico, traveled into present day New Mexico in search of the fabled city of Cibola and made contact with the people of Zuni.

(4) The Hispanic influence in New Mexico is particularly dominant and a part of daily living for all the citizens of New Mexico, who are a diverse composite of racial, ethnic, and cultural peoples. Don Juan de Oarte and the first New Mexican families established the first capital in the United States, San Juan de los Caballeros, in July of 1598.

(5) Based on the 1990 census, there are approximately 650,000 Hispanics in New Mexico, the majority having roots reaching back ten or more generations.

(6) There are an additional 200,000 Hispanics living outside of New Mexico with roots in New Mexico.

(7) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center is a living tribute to the Hispanic experience and will provide all citizens of New Mexico, the Southwestern United States, the entire United States, and around the world, an opportunity to learn about, partake in, and enjoy the unique Hispanic culture, and the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will assure that this 400-year old culture is preserved.

(8) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will teach, showcase, and share all facets of Hispanic culture, including literature, performing arts, visual arts, culinary arts, and language arts.

(9) The New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center will promote a better cross-cultural understanding of the Hispanic culture and the