

University Medical Center, Dr. Harry Jacobson in one sentence describes very well what his peers feel about Dr. Satcher.

I quote from that letter.

We believe Dr. Satcher is well qualified to fill these two positions where his medical knowledge, executive experience, and very real eloquence on behalf of the Nation's health make him uniquely suited.

From the Tennessee Medical Association, talking about his tenure at Meharry—remember, he was there for 11 years—Dr. Benton Adkins, who is President of the Tennessee Medical Association, writes:

During his tenure at Meharry, he presented a strong voice in the Nashville community as a public health advocate. I am especially pleased to commend him to you for consideration in light of his stellar leadership, unparalleled history of community service, and sense of mission in the public health sector.

In the third letter, Mr. Samuel Howard, chairman of Phoenix Healthcare Corp., who had known him well through working together at Meharry, says:

Dr. Satcher is a physician-scholar with a strong public health focus.

Those are just samplings of the sort of recommendations by his associates.

I urge my colleagues to focus on Dr. David Satcher's qualifications to hold the two positions of U.S. Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health. As I mentioned, he is a family physician. He respects the role of the family within the community. He is an accomplished scientist and researcher. He has a Ph.D. as well as a medical degree. His Ph.D. is in cytogenetics—he allows science to drive decisionmaking, not politics. He is a proven public health leader—an experienced public health leader—having served as Director, where he currently serves, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, which is that Health and Human Service agency responsible for promoting health and preventing disease, injury, and premature death, with 11 major branches and worldwide responsibilities.

Mr. President, in closing, as a physician, I will have to say that ultimately much of my feeling comes back to putting faith in the trust, which is a very vital part of the doctor-patient relationship. I look at this very similarly. The Surgeon General is the people's doctor. And, to be truly effective, Dr. Satcher must earn and maintain the public's trust on health issues. Trust I think will be a large part of this nomination. It was the main reason, if we look at failures, I think that occurred in the past as related to this position.

From everything that I know of Dr. Satcher, he not only has the ability to be a reasoned scientific voice but he has the ability to win the trust of the American people.

I am fortunate to have known Dr. Satcher in his capacity as physician, as a president of a medical school, and as the head of one of our great public health agencies.

I will work with my colleagues in the U.S. Senate in this nomination process, and I urge their full, fair, and expeditious consideration of Dr. Satcher's nomination.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I want to say a few words this morning about the Vice President of the United States—a man with whom most of us in this Chamber have served either in the House or here in the Senate.

Right now, the bright glare of the public spotlight is on AL GORE. I think all of us know that public spotlight can sometimes be very harsh and unforgiving. Sometimes it can distort. But I don't believe the frenzy of the moment is going to diminish the achievement of two decades.

AL GORE has spent 21 years in public life—and it has been a distinguished 21 years by any standard. Before his career in the Congress, he was an investigative reporter for the Nashville Tennessean. Prior to that time, he was a student at Vanderbilt's Divinity and Law Schools. And prior to that, he served this country honorably during the Vietnam war.

People sometimes make a caricature of AL GORE's reputation for seriousness and honesty. But the truth of the matter is that AL GORE earned that reputation by immersing himself totally in his responsibilities as a lawmaker.

In the House, he mastered the subtleties of the arms control debate and made internationally recognized contributions to stabilizing the nuclear arms race. In the Senate, he devoted himself passionately to protecting the environment. He was one of the first in this body to appreciate the potential of Federal Government supercomputers and the backbone that ultimately became the information superhighway. There's every likelihood that he will be remembered as a parent of the internet just as his own father is remembered as one of the founders of the Interstate Highway System.

By almost all accounts, AL GORE has been the most influential and effective Vice President in modern American history. His Reinventing Government Program has literally revolutionized the executive branch agencies, reducing the size of bureaucracies, cutting out red tape, and building a more business-like paradigm for the delivery of vital services to the American people.

That litany of achievement is real and familiar. I only run through it to

give some sense of proportion to the charges that are now dominating the news. And my point is simple: we know AL GORE in this Chamber. The American people know him. The hearings we've had here in the Congress have revealed nothing to alter what we know. And I don't believe that insubstantial charges based on ambiguous law are going to count for anything against AL GORE's solid and unambiguous record of public service.

I'm confident that, ultimately, a dispassionate and fair-minded American people will put the issues raised in the last campaign in their proper perspective. And I'm equally confident that, at the end of the day, AL GORE's reputation for public service and integrity will emerge absolutely intact.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, September 11, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,414,576,336,750.83. (Five trillion, four hundred fourteen billion, five hundred seventy-six million, three hundred thirty-six thousand, seven hundred fifty dollars and eighty-three cents)

One year ago, September 11, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,219,274,000,000. (Five trillion, two hundred nineteen billion, two hundred seventy-four million)

Five years ago, September 11, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,032,390,000,000. (Four trillion, thirty-two billion, three hundred ninety million)

Ten years ago, September 11, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,353,045,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fifty-three billion, forty-five million)

Twenty-five years ago, September 11, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$435,983,000,000 (Four hundred thirty-five billion, nine hundred eighty-three million) which reflects a debt increase of nearly \$5 trillion—\$4,978,593,336,750.83 (Four trillion, nine hundred seventy-eight billion, five hundred ninety-three million, three hundred thirty-six thousand, seven hundred fifty dollars and eighty-three cents) during the past 25 years.

NOMINATION OF DR. DAVID SATCHER TO BE SURGEON GENERAL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I commend President Clinton for his announcement today of his nomination of Dr. David Satcher to be Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health.

David Satcher is an excellent choice for these important positions. As Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the last 4 years, he has ably led that agency which is responsible for protecting health and preventing disease, injury, and premature death. He is uniquely

qualified to become the Nation's foremost spokesman on health issues.

In 1992, under Dr. Satcher's leadership, the CDC launched and implemented a successful childhood immunization initiative. Before the initiative, only a little more than half of the Nation's children—55 percent—were immunized. Now, 78 percent are immunized. As a result, vaccine-preventable childhood diseases are at record lows.

Dr. Satcher has also led CDC efforts to strengthen the Nation's defenses against infectious diseases and food-borne illnesses. We rely on the CDC to provide a rapid response to outbreaks of disease and protect public safety. Under Dr. Satcher, CDC has begun to implement a comprehensive strategy on infectious diseases and plays a key role in a new early warning system on food-borne illnesses.

Dr. Satcher was previously a member of the faculty of the UCLA School of Medicine and the King/Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles. For 2 years, he served as interim dean of the Drew Postgraduate Medical School. He also served as professor and chairman of the department of community medicine and family practice at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.

For over a decade, from 1982 to 1993, Dr. Satcher served as president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, the Nation's largest private historically black institution for educating health care professionals and biomedical researchers.

At the CDC, he has combined a proven track record of leadership and effectiveness that make him an excellent choice to be Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health, and I urge the Senate to move expeditiously to confirm him.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 1172. A bill for the relief of Sylvester Flis; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BOND, Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. REID, Mr. KEMPTHORNE, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. INHOFE,

Mr. DORGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 1173. A bill to authorize funds for construction of highway safety programs, and for mass transit programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MOYNIHAN (by request):

S. 1174. A bill to improve the operations and governance of the Internal Revenue Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 1172. A bill for the relief of Sylvester Flis; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PRIVATE RELIEF LEGISLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer legislation on behalf of Mr. Sylvester Flis, a permanent resident alien from Poland, now living in Chicago. This bill would grant immediate citizenship to Sylvester by waiving the mandatory 5-year waiting period required of all permanent residents wishing to become U.S. citizens. Out of great respect for what U.S. citizenship stands for and the privileges it bestows, the Senate has rarely granted this kind of request, and only in cases that it deems to be uniquely compelling. After hearing Sylvester's story, I am confident my colleagues will agree with me that this request fulfills this high standard and is therefore deserving of their support.

Sylvester entered this country as a permanent resident in July 1994 after learning that his grandmother, by virtue of having been born in New Haven, CT and being a U.S. citizen, could sponsor her family to be in the United States. He now lives in Chicago with his parents, Czeslaw and Lucja, his sister, Anna, and brother, Ireneusz.

Like many young Eastern Europeans who grew up during the final years of Soviet domination, Sylvester, now 23 years of age, is eager to take advantage of the opportunities offered by his new found freedom. He currently takes English classes and is working toward his GED, general equivalency diploma. Sylvester works for his uncle's carpentry business and hopes to eventually find a job in electronics, which is what he studied as a student in Poland. Like the millions of immigrants who have preceded him, Sylvester has left behind the security of friends and familiar surroundings to come to the United States to share his talents and make our Nation a stronger one.

Two things, however, make Sylvester very different from most immigrants. First, he suffers from a disease known as spina bifida. Spina bifida is the failure of the spine to close during the first month of pregnancy. This results in varying degrees of paralysis, loss of sensation in the lower limbs, difficulty with bowel and bladder management, and learning disabilities. As a result of his condition, Sylvester is confined to a wheelchair.

The second thing that distinguishes Sylvester from most immigrants is that he is a world class athlete. Despite his condition, Sylvester has developed into one of the top sled hockey players in the country. I imagine most of you are unfamiliar with sled hockey, as was I until I became familiar with Sylvester's story. Sled hockey is a variation of regular hockey that is played by disabled individuals on a regulation rink. Sled hockey has all the same rules as regular hockey except that players use sleds, rather than ice skates, to maneuver around the ice.

Last Spring, Sylvester competed with the United States National Team in international sled hockey competitions in Sweden and the United Kingdom. He hopes to compete with the United States in the 1998 Paralympics in Nagano, Japan next March. The Paralympics are an international athletic competition for individuals with mobility disabilities held every 4 years. They begin soon after the completion of the regular Olympic Games and are held in the same city and country as the Olympics. Sylvester is considered a lock to make next year's team.

To make that dream a reality, however, Sylvester needs to be a U.S. citizen by the end of this coming January, which is when the final team will be selected. While the International Olympic Committee allows Paralympians to represent countries with which they have permanent residency, the U.S. Olympic Committee [USOC] has very strict rules which require citizenship for all U.S. competitors. Sylvester was eligible to participate with the United States team in Europe last Spring because those competitions were not sponsored by the USOC. By granting Sylvester citizenship and waiving the mandatory 5-year-waiting period, he will be eligible to compete for the United States in Japan. Without a waiver, Sylvester would become a citizen in July 1999, which would be too late for the 1998 games. Poland will not be competing in sled hockey at these games, making the United States team Sylvester's only chance to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event.

As I mentioned at the outset, Sylvester is more than just a good athlete who wants to compete for the United States. He is a young man of tremendous character who has worked hard to become part of our community. I've spoken to several people who have worked with Sylvester and they all attest to his work ethic, his character, and his enthusiasm for helping others. This spirit is best demonstrated by the active role he has played in the Chicago community to help other disabled individuals overcome the obstacles they face in their daily lives. His volunteer activities include teaching sled hockey at the Chicago Park District to disabled and nondisabled individuals. He also volunteers with Wheelchair Dance Chicago, an organization that, as the name suggests, helps disabled individuals learn to dance. Through his