

it should be the Forest Service's intention to focus more of the funding and effort at the field level.

Should the conferees be agreeable to adopting the language that we are including in the Senate bill, I would hope that conference report language could be included which directs the Forest Service to tailor its work force and organization appropriately.

I would hope that the conferees note that expenditures on regional office operations and centralized field costs at the regional headquarters have risen to 30 percent from 18 percent of annual appropriated funds since 1993.

I trust that everyone recognizes that the reduced timber volume offered under the new TLMP plan will create economic hardships for local communities and that imbalanced distribution of remaining Federal jobs and spending in the region may compound those hardships. Accordingly, I would hope that the conference report would direct the regional Forester to conduct a regional work load study and to develop a work force plan that ensures high levels of customer service throughout the region, preserves the regional headquarters in Alaska, evaluates the need to consolidate and/or relocate offices, including relocating the regional office to Ketchikan, and provides for implementation by January 1, 2000.

Further, the workforce plan should reflect the full participation of affected southeast Alaska communities, and include a community-by-community assessment of economic impacts and the rationale used by the regional forester to distribute Federal jobs under the work force plan. I hope that any work force plan will emphasize retention of personnel experienced in southeast Alaska's multiple use mission, will make maximum use of local hiring authority, and will be submitted to committees of jurisdiction in both the House and Senate by March 1, 1998, for review and further guidance, if warranted.

Under my amendment, any expenditures at the regional office in excess of \$17.5 million from the funds provided to the region would have to be preceded by a 60-day notification of the Appropriations Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. I believe this language properly reflects the results of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources oversight efforts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to. The amendment (No. 1217) was agreed to.

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

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

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GORTON. 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. GORTON. Mr. President, I understand the Presiding Officer has certain announcements to make.

APPOINTMENT BY THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, pursuant to Public Law 101-445, appoints Charles H. White, of Mississippi, to the National Nutrition Monitoring Advisory Council.

TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces that the Senate has received from the House H.R. 2378, the Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill for fiscal 1998.

Under a previous order, all after the enacting clause of H.R. 2378 is stricken, and the text of S. 1023, as passed by the Senate, is inserted in lieu thereof, the House bill, as amended, is read a third time, and passed. The Senate insists on its amendment, requests a conference with the House, and the Chair appoints the following conferees.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. HUTCHINSON) appointed Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. KOHL, and Ms. MIKULSKI, conferees on the part of the Senate.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces that the Senate has received from the House H.R. 2264, the Labor-HHS appropriations bill for fiscal 1998.

Under a previous order, all after the enacting clause of H.R. 2264 is stricken and the text of S. 1061, as passed by the Senate, is inserted in lieu thereof. The House bill is read a third time, and passed. The Senate insists on its amendment, requests a conference with the House, and the Chair appoints the following conferees.

The Presiding Officer (Mr. HUTCHINSON) appointed Mr. SPECTER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GORTON, Mr. BOND, Mr. GREGG, Mr. FAIRCLOTH, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. INOUE, Mr. BUMPERS, Mr. REID, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. BYRD conferees on the part of the Senate.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now 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.

OPERATION DRUG FREE GEORGIA

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, during a recent meeting in my home State of Georgia, a young woman approached me to express her concerns and hope that we can soon eradicate drugs from her home town of Cordele, GA. Her comments were written down on a piece of paper and were as follows:

I can be anything, if I put my mind to it. But, if I use drugs I won't have a mind to do anything.

Drugs Destroy Dreams. United we can help Senator Coverdell stomp out drugs in Cordele.

Mr. President, her comments struck me because they are frank and hard-hitting—if you use drugs, you will not be able to follow your hopes and dreams.

As we legislate in this body, we must continue to listen to our youth as they convey this message. For after all, they are the ones in which the future, and all of our dreams, lies.

SALLIE MAE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, a constituent of mine, Mr. Brad Cohen, has been named the winner of the 1997 Sallie Mae First Class Teacher Award for the State of Georgia. I ask unanimous consent that a congratulatory letter to him be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, August 26, 1997.
Mr. BRADLEY COHEN,
Atlanta, GA

DEAR BRAD: It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on being named the winner of the "1997 Sallie Mae First Class Teacher Award" for the State of Georgia.

Brad, you have every reason to be proud of this achievement; it is indeed a special honor to have been singled out among the thousands of gifted and dedicated school teachers throughout our wonderful State. You have set a marvelous example for your students, enlightening them with your own experience and the importance of self-confidence. Your second-graders are truly lucky to share your knowledge and enthusiasm.

Thank you for your outstanding contributions to the youth of Georgia, and best wishes for every continued success.

Sincerely,
PAUL D. COVERDELL,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I thank you, and once again congratulate Mr. Cohen on his achievement.

U.S. FOREIGN OIL CONSUMPTION FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 5TH

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, the American Petroleum Institute reports that for the week ending September 12,

the United States imported 9,371,000 barrels of oil each day, 1,799,000 barrels more than the 7,572,000 imported each day during the same week a year ago.

Americans relied on foreign oil for 59.6 percent of their needs last week, and there is no sign that the upward spiral will abate. Before the Persian Gulf war, the United States obtained approximately 45 percent of its oil supply from foreign countries. During the Arab oil embargo in the 1970's, foreign oil accounted for only 35 percent of America's oil supply.

Anybody else interested in restoring domestic production of oil? By U.S. producers using American workers?

Politicians had better ponder the economic calamity sure to occur in America if and when foreign producers shut off our supply—or double the already enormous cost of imported oil flowing into the United States—now 9,371,000 barrels a day.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, September 16, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,391,866,026,111.66. (Five trillion, three hundred ninety-one billion, eight hundred sixty-six million, twenty-six thousand, one hundred eleven dollars and sixty-six cents)

One year ago, September 16, 1996, the Federal debt stood at \$5,217,327,000,000 (Five trillion, two hundred seventeen billion, three hundred twenty-seven million)

Five years ago, September 16, 1992, the Federal debt stood at \$4,036,030,000,000. (Four trillion, thirty-six billion, thirty million)

Ten years ago, September 16, 1987, the Federal debt stood at \$2,353,294,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fifty-three billion, two hundred ninety-four million)

Fifteen years ago, September 16, 1982, the Federal debt stood at \$1,105,897,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred five billion, eight hundred ninety-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,285,969,026,111.66 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty-five billion, nine hundred sixty-nine million, twenty-six thousand, one hundred eleven dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 15 years.

RETIREMENT OF RONNIE ABRAMS

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great friend and a great Kentuckian. This month, Ronnie Abrams will retire from Coopers & Lybrand L.L.P. after 40 years of dedicated service. I first met Ronnie and his wife Marie when I was Governor of Kentucky. Since then, I've not only had the pleasure of working with him on many Kentucky projects, but I've also come to count on his advice and counsel over the years.

Ronnie has made many contributions to his hometown of Louisville through

his work with a wide range of groups including Adath Israel B'Rith Sholom, the Jewish Community Federation, Metro United Way, and the Louisville Chamber of Commerce. In each of these organizations, Ronnie has served in leadership positions and devoted countless hours of volunteer service. In recognition of his efforts to make the community a better place for everyone, the B'nai Brith honored him with the 1992 Person of the Year Award.

Ronnie has also been an active member of his profession through the American Institute of CPA's tax division, the Louisville Chamber of Commerce's State tax committee, the Estate Planning Council of Louisville, and as chairman of the Kentucky Society of CPA's State taxation committee.

Beyond his community and professional activities, Ronnie has been an invaluable advisor to many political leaders, myself included. He has shared his expertise in tax matters with policy makers at the State, local, and Federal level, providing both is expertise and old-fashioned commonsense.

During his four decades and Coopers & Lybrand L.L.P., Ronnie has provided solutions on tax planning and compliance matters to a large clientele in the manufacturing, retail, financial service, and health care sectors. He began his career with the firm in 1957 after graduating from Vanderbilt University and the University of Louisville. A partner since 1971, he retires as the tax market leader for Kentucky.

Mr. President, I hope all my colleagues will join me in thanking Ronnie for his hard work over the years, wishing him and his family the best of luck in the future. I know that no matter what he chooses to do, he will continue to excel and to be an asset to the community.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, 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.)

REPORT ON FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 66

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

To the Congress of the United States:

As provided by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (Public Law 92-463; 5 U.S.C., App. 2, 6(c)), I am submitting the Twenty-Fifth Annual Report on Federal Advisory Committees, covering fiscal year 1996.

The executive branch continues to implement my policy of maintaining the number of advisory committees within the ceiling of 534 required by Executive Order 12838 of February 10, 1993. As a result, the number of discretionary advisory committees (established under general congressional authorizations) was held to 501, or 37 percent fewer than those 801 committees in existence at the beginning of my Administration. Savings achieved through the elimination of discretionary committees during fiscal year 1996 totalled \$2.5 million.

Through the advisory committee planning process required by Executive Order 12838, departments and agencies have worked to minimize the total number of advisory committees specifically mandated by statute. The 407 such groups supported at the end of fiscal year 1996 represents a modest 7 percent decrease over the 439 in existence at the beginning of my Administration. However, more can be done to assure that the total costs to fund these groups in fiscal year 1997, or \$38.5 million, are dedicated to support high-priority public involvement efforts.

During fiscal year 1996, the General Services Administration (GSA) initiated a process for collaborating with executive departments and agencies to increase public participation opportunities at all levels of American society. Building upon my Administration's commitment to expand access to Federal decisionmakers, managers at all levels will be provided with more timely guidance that includes enhanced options for achieving objectives, better training, and exposure to a variety of tools and techniques, which when used in conjunction with advisory committees, offer additional flexibility to address a wide variety of public participation needs.

Actions to broaden the scope and effectiveness of public participation within the Federal sector will continue during fiscal year 1997. During the year, GSA will develop newly updated guidance implementing FACA. At the same time, GSA will continue to support and work closely with such agencies as the Council on Environmental Quality and the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to align its efforts with key Administration policies relating to ecosystem and land management priorities.

My Administration will continue to work with the Congress to assure that all advisory committees that are required by statute are regularly reviewed through the congressional reauthorization process and that remaining committees are instrumental in achieving national interests.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.