

communism, were called acts of "aggression" by the Cuban government.

Second, a new security law for the "Protection of National Independence and Economy" was passed by the Cuban government in February. The law criminalizes any form of cooperation or participation in pro-democracy efforts. It imposes penalties ranging from 20 to 30 years, for those found to be cooperating with the U.S. government. Government officials have already warned human rights activists that violations are punishable under the new law.

And third, the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices details the same human rights abuses as last year and the year before. One is hard-pressed to find any improvements. The Report repeats last year's finding that the Cuban government's human rights record remains poor. It reiterates the finding that the government continues to "systematically violate fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens." Security forces "committed serious human rights abuses."

The examples of human rights violations in the Report are numerous, and startling. Human rights activists are beaten in their homes and outside churches. People are arbitrarily detained and arrested. Political prisoners are denied food and medicine brought by their families. Even children are made to stand in the rain chanting slogans against pro-democracy activists.

I would, therefore, say to those countries seeking increased ties with Cuba—take a look at this record. Do not lend any credibility or legitimacy to a government that denies its people basic human rights, and punishes those seeking a peaceful transition to democracy.

While the Western Hemisphere gradually moves towards greater respect for human rights, Cuba remains mired in its communist past. Once again, it is the Cuban people who suffer.

This resolution demonstrates that the United States' Senate stands united, not divided, in condemning human rights abuses in Cuba. It also sends a strong message to not only the U.N. Human Rights Commission, but also to the Cuban people. We will stand with you and support you until the day that you are free.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

Mr. MACK. There are no further speakers on my side, so I am prepared to yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. GRAHAM. There are no other speakers on our side of the aisle, so I also yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 114

(Purpose: To transfer funds from the environmental programs and management account of the Environmental Protection Agency to the State and tribal assistance grant account)

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I send to the desk an amendment which is one of the relevant amendments listed by the majority leader. It is on behalf of Senator CRAPO, dealing with the transfer of funds from the environmental programs and management account of the EPA to the State and tribal assistance grant account. This has been cleared on both sides, and I ask that it be considered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), for Mr. CRAPO, proposes an amendment numbered 114.

Mr. STEVENS. 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 58, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

SEC. 4. . WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.

Of the amount appropriated under the heading "ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS AND MANAGEMENT" in title III of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-276), \$1,300,000 shall be transferred to the State and tribal assistance grant account for a grant for water and wastewater infrastructure projects in the State of Idaho.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 114) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to remove from the list Senator DEWINE's amendment on steel and Senator MURRAY's amendment on rural schools.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. 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. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to send to the desk and consider, en bloc, the following amendments:

A Kohl-Harkin-Durbin amendment to provide funding for conservation technical assistance; a Bond-Durbin-Ashcroft-Grassley-Frist-Harkin amendment for additional funding for section 32 assistance to producers; a Byrd amendment to provide additional funding for rural water infrastructure; a technical amendment of my own regarding the provision of emergency assistance made available for fiscal year 1999; a Feinstein-Boxer amendment to increase the emergency funds made available for emergency grants to low-income migrant and seasonal workers.

The last amendment deals with a \$5 million increase which we believe is offset with the current bill. The others are offset.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 115 THROUGH 119, EN BLOC

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I send the amendments to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) proposes amendments numbered 115 through 119, en bloc.

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

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 115

(Purpose: To provide funding for conservation technical assistance)

On page 37, line 9 strike "\$285,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$313,000,000".

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

"SEC. . Notwithstanding Section 11 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714i), an additional \$28,000,000 shall be provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation in fiscal year 1999 for technical assistance activities performed by an agency of the Department of Agriculture in carrying out any conservation or environmental program funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation: *Provided*, That the entire amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request for \$28,000,000, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to the Congress: *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act."

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today, along with Senators HARKIN and DURBIN, I introduce an amendment to add \$28 million this fiscal year to the Conservation Reserve Program CRP, run

by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS of USDA. The amendment is fully offset and acceptable to Senator COCHRAN and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

One of the benefits of my job is having an opportunity to travel many of the highways and backroads of the State of Wisconsin. And, I like so many other residents of my State, never tire of the landscape of rolling hills, grazing dairy cows, and handsome farms. In the last few years, dotted among these lovely farms, is a new sight—or, perhaps more accurately, a sight so old that not many of us have had a chance to experience it. There are patches of land where the native trees, grasses and flowers are growing again; where white tail deer and pheasant walk among wood violets and sugar maples the way they did 150 years ago. These pieces of land, restored to their original natural beauty, are living museums—reminders to ourselves and our children of the magnificence of Wisconsin's native landscape.

Much of this land restoration is due to the Conservation Reserve Program, a federal program that, in effect, rents land from farmers and restores it to its natural state. Wisconsin farmers have enthusiastically embraced this effort enrolling 72,000 acres of land in the CRP this year alone. Altogether, the CRP has restored 600,000 acres of land in Wisconsin.

Despite this program's great success—in Wisconsin and rural areas across the country—a provision of the 1996 farm bill has inadvertently put the CRP in jeopardy. Section 11 of the farm bill capped the administrative costs that the USDA can pay out on any program. The provision was an attempt to slow some over-enthusiastic compute purchasing at the USDA. Unfortunately, it also capped the technical assistance allowed under the CRP in a way that will make it illegal for the CRP to identify or enroll new acres after May of this year. Our amendment today, by adding \$28 million for these necessary administrative functions, will allow the CRP to continue its work.

Our offset today is from the food stamp reserve fund, and I want to say a word about that. Every year, we put aside more money than we anticipate we will need to cover our food stamps obligations. We do so in order to make sure that that very vital anti-hunger program is available even if demand increases because of an unexpected economic downturn. As the year progresses without such a downturn, it is appropriate and responsible budgeting to move some of those funds, which will not be needed, into areas where there is pressing needs.

That said, we still must keep a reasonable balance in reserve for food stamps, and in no way should this fund be viewed by others with amendments as a piggy bank.

The CRP is an example of an environmental program that successfully mar-

ries the interests of farmers, conservationists, and nature lovers. It is voluntary, it is local in direction, it is effective. I am glad we were able to agree to keep such a worthy program alive this year, and I thank my colleagues who have helped clear this amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 116

(Purpose: To appropriate additional funds to the fund maintained for funds made available under section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935, and to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the limitation on the amount of such funds that may be devoted during fiscal year 1999 to 1 agricultural commodity or product thereof, with an offset)

On page 2, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

FUNDS FOR STRENGTHENING MARKETS, INCOME, AND SUPPLY (SECTION 32)

For an additional amount for the fund maintained for funds made available under section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935 (7 U.S.C. 612c), \$150,000,000: *Provided*, That the entire amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request for \$150,000,000, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to Congress: *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement under section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act.

On page 7, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

GENERAL PROVISION, THIS CHAPTER

SEC. _____. The Secretary of Agriculture may waive the limitation established under the second sentence of the second paragraph of section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935 (7 U.S.C. 612c), on the amount of funds that may be devoted during fiscal year 1999 to any 1 agricultural commodity or product thereof.

On page 37, line 9, strike "\$285,000,000" and insert "\$435,000,000".

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise today to join the senior senator from Missouri, Senator BOND, in offering an amendment to help the plight of the hog farmers in the state of Missouri. Hog farmers in our home state, and across the nation, are experiencing a disaster outside of their control, much like a flood, drought, or disease. It was projected that 25 to 40 percent of Missouri's pork producers would lose their family farms if we do not take immediate and substantial action. That is why we have offered this amendment.

The statistics are devastating. Since June 1998, pork farmers experienced a roughly 70 percent decline in pork prices, from \$40 per hundredweight to \$9 per hundredweight. The 1998 average price was an astounding 30 percent below the average price in 1932. In 1933, market hogs brought \$3.53 a hundredweight, which is \$47.29 in today's dollars.

There was a \$2.6 billion equity meltdown on hog farms across America, and Economist Glen Grimes, at the University of Missouri, projects that hog farmers will suffer another one billion loss in 1999.

Some hog farmers have told me that they would have been better off finan-

cially if their hogs had simply been destroyed by a natural disaster. At one point, the feed the hogs were eating was worth more than the hogs themselves. And not long ago, consumers were paying more for a canned ham than the 260-pound hog it came from.

To address this disaster on hog farms across America, the Administration committed \$50 million to their plight. While this amount sends a message of support to hog farmers, it is inadequate in light of the severity of the crisis to our family farms.

The Missouri Farm Bureau and the Missouri Pork Producers requested our assistance, and we have responded. Today, Senator BOND and I are offering this amendment, which makes \$250 million available for farmers struggling to survive the severe drop in pork prices. Under the amendment, the U.S. Department of Agriculture would be provided with \$150 million new funds and would be given the authority to use another \$100 million, that the USDA already has, to help hog farmers.

The amendment sends a clear and resounding message of support to Missouri's hog farmers. In my recent trips to Missouri, I met with numerous hog farmers and was alarmed to hear them say that many of them would have to sell the family farm if we do not act expediently. This situation demands action, and I have taken immediate action at the request of Missouri's family farmers.

It is the understanding of those of us that have offered this amendment today that the majority of the funds available to the Secretary of Agriculture will be used on behalf of our nation's pork farmers. Last year, all of the major commodity groups received disaster assistance, but the hog farmers received nothing.

In current law (Section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935) the Department of Agriculture has broad authority to reestablish farmers' purchasing power by making payments, to encourage domestic consumption by diverting surpluses to low-income groups, and to encourage the export of farm products through producer payments or other means. However, the amount devoted to any one commodity shall not exceed 25 percent of the Section 32 funds. Most recently, the USDA recently used its Section 32 authority to make a \$50 million direct cash payment to pork producers.

Our amendment adds \$150 million to the USDA Section 32 Fund, to be used for hog farmers, and it waives the 25 percent cap on the USDA Section 32 Fund for the remainder of fiscal year 1999. These funds would be made available to help the current emergency situation in the pork industry.

In addition to today's amendment, I would also like to mention some of the initiatives that I have worked on with the Missouri Farm Bureau and the Missouri Pork Producers in order to address the pork crisis:

Initiated a request, with Senator BOB KERREY (D-NE), to U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky successfully urging her to add European Union pork to the U.S. trade retaliation list against the EU's unfair trade practices.

Requested that the U.S. Government buy excess hogs from farmers and ship U.S. pork as emergency assistance to Central America.

Wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada urging him to resolve work stoppage in the Ontario pork packers plant so that Canada can slaughter its hogs instead of flooding our slaughter houses with Canadian hogs.

Wrote to the President and the Secretary of Agriculture requesting that they use all their authority to ensure that no unfair competition or antitrust practices exist in domestic pork markets. It concerns me that farmer's prices for hogs at the farm gate have plummeted while prices at the cash register have not dropped equally for the consumer.

Requested of the Administration an immediate moratorium on burdensome new federal regulations affecting hog producers, and wrote to the President to ease paperwork requirements placed on farmers and banks so that the money can quickly get to those who need it.

Introduced a congressional resolution (S. Con. Res. 4) with Senator MAX BAUCUS which demands that South Korea end its unfair trade practices and subsidies that hurt American pork producers. The resolution also urges the U.S. Trade Representative, the Secretary of Treasury, and the Secretary of Agriculture to take immediate action against such harmful Korean subsidies.

AMENDMENT NO. 117

(Purpose: To provide funding for rural water infrastructure)

On page 37, line 9 strike "\$313,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$343,000,000".

On page 5, after line 20 insert the following:

RURAL COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

For an additional amount for the costs of direct loans and grants of the rural utilities programs described in section 381E(d)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2009f), as provided in 7 U.S.C. 1926(a) and 7 U.S.C. 1926C for distribution through the national reserve, \$30,000,000, of which \$25,000,000 shall be for grants under such program: *Provided*, That the entire amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request for \$30,000,000, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to the Congress: *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 118

At the appropriate place in the bill insert the following new section:

SEC. . Notwithstanding any other provision of law, monies available under section 763 of the Agriculture, Rural Development,

Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 shall be provided by the Secretary of Agriculture directly to any state determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to have been materially affected by the commercial fishery failure or failures declared by the Secretary of Commerce in September, 1998 under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Such state shall disburse the funds to individuals with family incomes below the federal poverty level who have been adversely affected by the commercial fishery failure or failures. *Provided*, That the entire amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request for such amount, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to Congress. *Provided further*, That the entire amount is designated by Congress as an emergency requirement under section 251(b)(2)(A) of such Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 119

On page 2, line 11, strike \$20,000,000 and insert \$25,000,000.

On page 2, line 13, strike \$20,000,000 and insert \$25,000,000.

On page 37, line 9, increase the amount by \$5,000,000.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, this amendment increases funding for USDA's Emergency Grants to Assistance Low-Income Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers program by \$5 million. The increase in funding is provided to cover additional needs, including a possible increase in WIC caseload as a result of the devastating citrus freeze which impacted California last December.

I understand the amendment has been agreed to on both sides, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask for the adoption of these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendments are agreed to.

The amendments (Nos. 115 through 119) were agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendments were agreed to, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. 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. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment entitled "1998 Disaster" for Senator BOND be deleted from the list and that an amendment listed for Senator ASHCROFT entitled "Emergency Assistance to USDA" be deleted.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 120

(Purpose: To provide authority and appropriations for the Department of State to carry out certain counterdrug research and development activities)

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I send to the desk an amendment for Senator DEWINE and others to provide authority and funds for the Department of State's counterdrug program. This amendment includes an appropriate offset for the additional spending that is authorized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS] for Mr. DEWINE, for himself, Mr. BURNS and Mr. COVERDELL, proposes an amendment numbered 120:

On page 24, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

For an additional amount for "International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement", \$23,000,000, for additional counterdrug research and development activities: *Provided*, That the entire amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: *Provided further*, That such amount shall be available only to the extent an official budget request that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in such Act is transmitted by the President to the Congress.

On page 27 increase the amount of the rescission on line 9 by \$23,000,000.

On page 44, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

(b) Section 832(a) of the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act (Public Law 105-277) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence—

(A) by striking "Secretary of Agriculture" and inserting "Secretary of State"; and

(B) by striking "the Agricultural Research Service of the Department of Agriculture" and inserting "the Department of State";

(2) in paragraph (5), by inserting "(without regard to any requirement in law relating to public notice or competition)" after "to contract"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following: "Any record related to a contract entered into, or to an activity funded, under this subsection shall be exempted from disclosure as described in section 552(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code."

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. STEVENS. I ask that we proceed with that amendment at the desk.

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

The amendment (No. 120) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. 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. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, earlier today we had an amendment that I did not move to reconsider and I indicated I would move to reconsider at a later time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That was amendment No. 80.

Mr. STEVENS. And the purpose?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

To defer section 8 assistance for expiring contracts until October 1, 1999.

Mr. STEVENS. That amendment was agreed to. I move to reconsider the vote, and I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be laid on the table.

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

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, March 17, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,641,694,979,239.08 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-one billion, six

hundred ninety-four million, nine hundred seventy-nine thousand, two hundred thirty-nine dollars and eight cents).

One year ago, March 17, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,536,664,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred thirty-six billion, six hundred sixty-four million).

Five years ago, March 17, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,553,032,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred fifty-three billion, thirty-two million).

Ten years ago, March 17, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,736,679,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred thirty-six billion, six hundred seventy-nine million) which reflects a debt increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,905,015,979,239.08 (Two trillion, nine hundred five billion, fifteen million, nine hundred seventy-nine thousand, two hundred thirty-nine dollars and eight cents) during the past 10 years.

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS CRASH

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, as my colleagues know, a tragic accident occurred in Bourbonnais, Illinois on Monday night when an Amtrak passenger train, the City of New Orleans, collided with a tractor trailer carrying steel rods. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB, a crew of 18 people and 196 passengers were aboard the City of New Orleans when the accident occurred.

Eleven people lost their lives in the accident, NTSB officials report. I wish to convey my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and all others who have been touched by this tragedy. Illinois grieves with you.

I would also like to recognize the dedication of the local and State officials and citizens who have prevented this tragedy from becoming even worse. Local citizens worked through the night and into the early morning to locate victims, free them from the wreckage, and treat their injuries. Public safety officials from Bourbonnais, and from the communities and counties surrounding it, worked above and beyond the call of duty to save lives, rescue survivors, and prevent further harm from occurring.

Additionally, Federal officials from the Department of Transportation, the National Transportation Safety Board, the Highway Administration, the Railroad Administration, and Health and Human Services have traveled to Illinois to lend their expertise in the aftermath of this horrible accident.

And finally, nonprofit organizations like the American Red Cross have also served the victims, families, and friends associated with this accident. At times like this we remember the fragility of human life, and recognize the magnanimity of the human spirit. We commend the many volunteers and officials involved with the city of New Orleans accident. Their dedication to the welfare of those injured will be remembered in perpetuity.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, we were all saddened by the accident in-

volving the City of New Orleans Amtrak train in Illinois on Monday night.

Several Mississippians lost their lives in the accident including June Bonnin of Nesbit, and Raney and Lacey Lipscomb of Lake Cormorant. I know my colleagues join me in extending our sympathy to their families.

Mr. President, as is so often the case, tragedies such as this can bring out the best in individuals. Based on information provided to my office, it appears that three of the students from Covenant Christian High School in Clinton, Mississippi, who were on the train, became heroes.

These students were part of a group of 15 students returning from a spring break trip to Canada. According to persons on the scene, Michael Freeman, Caleb McNair, and Jeffrey Sartor, all 17-year-old Clinton residents, quickly reacted to the situation.

With fire quickly approaching from a nearby car, Michael and Caleb opened a window and began rescuing people trapped inside the train. Jeffrey and Mrs. Phyllis Hurley, a chaperone who was injured herself, began helping people get out of the train too.

Caleb also assisted firefighters in getting elderly people to safety and getting a young girl freed from the wreckage. When firefighters and other help arrived, Michael was still on top of a car helping people from other cars over to the closest ladder and down from the train. Even after the young men were escorted to the side, they continued to help carry stretchers of wounded to safety.

Mr. President, I extend my sympathy to all the victims and their families affected by the tragedy, and I commend the efforts of these young people and the many firefighters and emergency personnel who acted to save lives and assist the victims.

CERTIFIED NONSENSE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, here we go again. It seems that around this time every year we launch into certification follies. The occasion is the annual requirement that the administration report to Congress on the progress or lack of progress that countries are making in cooperating on combating drugs. This debate more recently gets personalized around the issue of the certification of Mexico.

There seems to be two basic elements in this affair: The acceptance by some in Congress that the administration only lies on certification therefore we should do away with the process and quit the pretense. And those who argue that it is unfair to judge the behavior of others and to force the President to make such judgments.

I do not think that either of these views is accurate or does justice to the seriousness of the issues we are dealing with. They are also not consonant with the actual requirements in certification.