

improving industry safety, providing statistical data, and providing community services;

Whereas keeping investment income free from tax encourages associations to maintain modest surplus funds that cushion against economic and fiscal downturns; and

Whereas corporations can increase prices to cover increased costs, while small and medium-sized local, regional, and State-based associations do not have such an option, and thus increased costs imposed by the President's association tax increase would reduce resources available for the important standard-setting, educational training, and professionalism training performed by associations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that Congress should reject the President's proposed tax increase on investment income of associations as defined under section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I am joined today by Senator CRAPO in introducing a Sense of the Senate Resolution rejecting a new tax proposed by the Clinton administration. As part of the administration's fiscal year 2000 budget proposal, this tax would be levied on the investment income earned by nonprofit trade associations and professional societies. This proposal, which would tax any income earned through interest, dividends, capital gains, rents and royalties in excess of \$10,000, imposes a tremendous burden on thousands of small- and mid-sized trade associations and professional societies currently exempt under 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The administration would like us to believe that this tax is targeted to a few large associations, affecting only those "lobbying organizations" which exist as tax shelters for members and to further the goals of special interests. Mr. President, nothing could be further from the truth.

This new tax would affect an estimated 70,000 registered trade associations and professional societies. The bulk of these associations operate at a state and local level, many of whom perform little, if any, lobbying function. In fact, associations rely on investment income to perform such vital services as education, training, standard setting, industry safety, research and statistical data, and community outreach. Through association-organized volunteer programs, Americans contribute more than 173 million volunteer hours per year, at a value estimated at over \$2 billion annually.

These organizations already contribute millions in taxes for any activities which place them in competition with for-profit businesses. Yet the administration would like to impose a new tax on income earned outside of the competitive business environment, income which is used to fund functions serving the public welfare. Unlike for-profit corporations, investment income does not go to shareholders, individuals, or other companies. Associations do not have the liberty of simply raising prices, as do ordinary corporations, to cover increased costs.

Mr. President, faced with an additional increase in taxes of \$1.44 billion

over the next five years, many associations will be forced to cut back on important services, and some may not survive an economic downturn without the small cushion their investments provide.

Without such services provided by associations, the Government will be forced to step in, increasing expenditures and creating additional Government programs and departments.

During a time when the Government is projecting on-budget tax surpluses of more than \$800 billion over the next 10 years, it is unconscionable that we allow the administration to levy a new tax on these nonprofit organizations.●

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Governmental Affairs Committee to meet on Monday, March 22, 1999, at 1:30 p.m. for a hearing on the topic of "Securities Fraud On The Internet."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities be authorized to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 22, 1999, in closed/open session to receive testimony on Department of Defense Policies and programs to combat terrorism.

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

STRATEGIC SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the strategic subcommittee of Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Monday, March 22, 1999, at 9 a.m. in open session, to receive testimony on National Security Space Programs and Policies, in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2000 and the future years defense program.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a joint hearing, before the subcommittees on Youth Violence and Criminal Justice Oversight of the Senate Judiciary Committee, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, March 22, 1999 at 1 p.m. to hold a hearing in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office building on: "Review of DOJ Firearm Prosecutions."

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be permitted to

meet on March 22, 1999 at 1 p.m. in Hart 216 for the purpose of conducting a hearing.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TUNISIA NATIONAL DAY

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Government and the people of Tunisia on the occasion of their annual National Day celebration, March 20, which this year marks the 43rd anniversary of their independence from France. While the Republic of Tunisia is only 43 years old, the Tunisian nation has a long rich history, dating back to ancient Carthage.

Accompanied by the senior U.S.-N.A.T.O. military commander responsible for the region, I was privileged to visit Tunisia last April. At the request of Admiral Lopez, I met with top government and military officials in the company of U.S. Embassy officials in hopes of integrating U.S. and Tunisian actions and efforts in Europe.

The United States and Tunisia go back a long way. In 1797, our two nations signed a treaty of peace and friendship. Among other things, this treaty called for "perpetual and constant peace." Indeed, for the past 200 years, our two nations have enjoyed such a relationship. During World War II, Tunisia's nationalist leaders suspended their struggle against France in order to support the Allied cause: they knew which side in that war was fighting for the values they held dear. During the tense cold war years, Tunisia was one of America's most reliable allies in the Mediterranean, and Tunisia's friendship proved of tremendous benefit to the Sixth Fleet.

Since the end of the cold war, Tunisia has continued to be a friend and ally of the United States. Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has been very active in supporting the Middle East peace process. He has also sought to open his country's economy to greater US investment, a goal that has gotten a recent boost from our own State Department, which has proposed a new trade partnership with the countries of North Africa, including Tunisia. Our military ties with Tunisia also remain strong. Just last month Defense Secretary William Cohen visited Tunisia and discussed a number of issues of mutual interest, including the Iraqi situation, the Middle East peace process and the Lockerbie bombing.

I think it is safe to say that few of our nation's bilateral relationships have been broadly and consistently positive for so long. I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Tunisia on its National Day and in honoring this great friend of the United States.●

JAMES D. WOOD, P.E.

• Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. President, I am proud that one of my constituents, James D. Wood of Abingdon, Maryland, is a finalist for the National Society of Professional Engineers' Federal Engineer of the Year Award.

Mr. Wood is a Program Manager for the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. He has made significant and lasting contributions to resolve complex air quality issues and enhance environmental auditing efforts at DOD installations throughout the world over the past two decades. His extraordinary technical skills, dedication to the engineering profession, superlative leadership, and personal commitment to subordinates distinguish him as a premier air quality expert in the Department of the Army.

Mr. Wood was instrumental in directing responses to air quality crises affecting U.S. forces, including assessing and mitigating health risks to U.S. peacekeepers in Bosnia. He is one of the foremost authorities on environmental auditing in the Army.

A member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, he has served in key leadership roles and on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Society of Professional Engineers, and in every leadership position of its Susquehanna Chapter during the past 15 years. His selfless efforts to promote engineering awareness of high school students are superb.

Wood holds a B.S. in chemical engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla, a M.S. in environmental engineering from the Johns Hopkins University, and a M.S. in engineering management from the Florida Institute of Technology. •

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY AGENT JOHN RAMNEY'S 37 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mr. John Ramney, a fellow Montana, who has spent 37 years in public service as an Agriculture Extension Agent for Yellowstone County, Montana. Over this period he has helped farmers, downtown business folks and the media with agricultural-related questions, in a professional manner that is a role model for exemplary public service today.

Mr. Ramney's career served Montana's agriculture industry with a unique quiet dedication not usually seen today. He began his career as a county agent in training in Thompson Falls and Great Falls, Montana. He then became a 4-H Agent with the Yellowstone County Extension Office in 1961. After serving as an assistant county agent in training in Billings for six years, he became a full fledged County Agent for Yellowstone County.

His job has involved educating the agricultural producers in Yellowstone

County, Montana to enhance their productivity. He has done this primarily by providing information from research done at Montana State University or other experiment stations. He has also conducted numerous meetings and workshops to strengthen the farmers' knowledge and capabilities as Yellowstone County moved from a rural to a more urban county. In addition, he tirelessly maintained personal contacts with local farmers to ensure their understanding about crops, livestock, farm machinery, and land leases were up to date.

Over his almost 40 years as a County Agent, Mr. Ramney always acted in a positive and helpful manner. He said that even though he has answered many, many questions over the years, he has learned that everyone who calls or stops by teaches him something. For example, he noted that a lot more calls were looking for information that people heard about from other universities and experimental stations in other parts of the country. With the advent of better communications, farmers knew more about what was happening in Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. As Mr. Ramney said, "They ask for it and I hunt for information wherever it might be." Ms. Mary Zartman, Personnel Director of the Montana State University Extension Service stated, with the news of Mr. Ramney's retirement, "He'll be a hard act to follow." Please join with me in recognizing an unusual American and a great Montanan. •

TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL AGENT STEVEN J. PIROTTE

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, for the past two years, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' Office of Legislative Affairs has been under the able leadership of Steven J. Pirotte. Special Agent Pirotte has served as the Executive Assistant to the Director of ATF since the beginning of 1997, and in that capacity, has provided conscientious service to many Members of Congress and their staffs, my own included.

Steve is moving to a new challenge on April 18, when he reports to his new post of duty as the Division Director and Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Boston Field Division, with oversight over ATF's functions in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Northern New York and New Hampshire. His honest counsel, assistance, and expertise will be missed by all of us who have worked with him.

Special Agent Pirotte began his career with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in 1975 in Falls Church, Virginia, later serving posts of duty in Washington, D.C., Winchester, Virginia, and Denver, Colorado. From 1986 to 1989, he served as Group Supervisor for the Mid-Atlantic Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force and coordinated all OCDETF investigations in the two field divisions and 26 offices throughout the Mid-Atlantic

states, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

He served three years on ATF's National Response Team, served as supervisor with the Metropolitan Area Task Force for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and just prior to his current assignment, served as Assistant Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Charlotte, North Carolina Field Division, overseeing bombing, church arson, firearms trafficking and cigarette diversion investigations.

Members of Congress have been well served with Steve at the helm of ATF's Legislative Affairs office, and we wish him well in his new position. •

SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 22, which is S. 364.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 364) to improve certain loan programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Small Business Investment Improvement Act of 1999. I am pleased to report the bill received unanimous support of my colleagues on the Committee on Small Business, when we voted to report the bill on February 5, 1999. This is important legislation for one simple reason: it makes more investment capital available to small businesses that are seeking to grow and hire new employees.

In 1958, Congress created the SBIC program to assist small business owners obtain investment capital. Forty years later, small businesses continue to experience difficulty in obtaining investment capital from banks and traditional investment sources. Although investment capital is readily available to large businesses from traditional Wall Street investment firms, small businesses seeking investments in the range of \$100,000-\$2.5 million have to look elsewhere. SBIC's are frequently the only sources of investment capital for growing small businesses.

Often we are reminded that the SBIC program has helped some of our Nation's best known companies. It has provided a financial boost at critical points in the early growth period for many companies that are familiar to all of us. For example, Federal Express received a needed infusion of capital from two SBA-licensed SBIC's at a critical juncture in its development stage. The SBIC program also helped other well-known companies, when they were not so well-known, such as Intel, Outback Steakhouse, America Online, and Callaway Golf.

What is not well known is the extraordinary help the SBIC program