

again mourning the loss of innocent lives lost to gunfire. And although the American public expresses continual outrage that federal firearms laws are not strong enough to prevent persons like Benjamin Smith from purchasing guns, Congress has not yet responded. We need to try, try again to pass meaningful legislation that will put an end to this senseless slaughter.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 15, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,625,473,322,843.46 (Five trillion, six hundred twenty-five billion, four hundred seventy-three million, three hundred twenty-two thousand, eight hundred forty-three dollars and forty-six cents).

One year ago, July 15, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,529,723,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-nine billion, seven hundred twenty-three million).

Five years ago, July 15, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,624,152,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred twenty-four billion, one hundred fifty-two million).

Twenty-five years ago, July 15, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$473,130,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-three billion, one hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,152,343,322,843.46 (Five trillion, one hundred fifty-two billion, three hundred twenty-two thousand, eight hundred forty-three dollars and forty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

VETERANS' SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the "Veterans' Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act."

By establishing the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, this bill will provide significant assistance to entrepreneurial veterans. Additionally, this legislation works to aid veterans through networking, supervision, microloans and loans, disaster assistance, and data collection programs. This bill provides assistance to many veterans who have the skills, talent and motivation to successfully own and operate small businesses but may not have the right connections or the ability to hire consultants. This bill is a means by which the federal government can help veterans help themselves.

Veterans have fought and sacrificed to protect the United States and the freedoms Americans cherish. Veterans' programs such as this provide us, in a small way, the capability to repay those veterans for their extraordinary contributions to our nation. These veterans have already given so much to our country and many of them want to contribute even more by starting small

businesses. I believe we owe it to them to do everything we can to help them in these endeavors.

Accordingly, I am proud to join The American Legion, the Disabled Veterans Association, the Reserve Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the many other military and veteran service organizations in support of this bill.

ADOPTION AWARENESS ACT OF 1999

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, I introduced the Adoption Awareness Act of 1999. The objective of this legislation is to provide proactive support for adoption as an option for women with unplanned pregnancies, and for couples who are unable to conceive a child due to problems with infertility. The bill would require certain federally-funded health centers to provide adoption counseling by trained adoption counselors.

The Adoption Awareness Act makes grants available to national adoption organizations to provide staff training in adoption counseling to eligible health centers. These health centers include Title X funded clinics, community health centers, migrant health centers, centers for the homeless, school-based clinics, and crisis pregnancy centers. The objective is to ensure that woman and their families are provided professional, compassionate, and understanding counseling about adoption.

This legislation also provides that faith-based charities may receive grants to provide adoption counseling training services on the same basis as any other nongovernmental provider without impairing the religious character of such institutions and without diminishing the religious freedom of those receiving services.

Finally, this legislation authorizes the appropriation of \$7,000,000 for fiscal year 2000 for purposes of providing adoption counseling training.

There are no unwanted babies in this country. Across America there are countless couples who cannot conceive a baby, and struggle, often hopelessly, to adopt a child. All the while, tragically, 1.5 million children are aborted every year. There are parents who desperately want the opportunity to provide these children with a loving home, and the gift of life itself.

The purpose of this legislation is not to incite a debate about abortion. The purpose of this legislation is to stress the value, indeed the sanctity of life, and the importance of adoption as an alternative to abortion. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that a woman struggling with the tragic choice of abortion is provided professional and compassionate counseling on adoption. A mother deserves to know that there are millions of couples out there who are willing, indeed desperate, to provide her child with a loving home. A mother deserves to know

that ending her child's life is not the only choice she has.

I speak from personal experience. I am an adoptive father. I am a staunch supporter of the choice of adoption. Every mother pondering the agony which is abortion deserves the hope this legislation offers. Every unborn child deserves the opportunity for life that this legislation offers.

I believe in the sanctity of human life. I have always fought for the rights of the unborn child, and the preservation of the intrinsic value of all human life. At approximately 1.5 million abortions every year, that is some 35 million children killed since the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Mr. President, regardless of your beliefs, pro-abortion, or pro-life, that is a staggering and tragic statistic. This legislation offers a chance at reducing that number. It is not the answer, but it does provide hope to couples struggling desperately to adopt children. As important, it provides hope to that mother or couple who is standing on the tragic precipice of abortion, ensuring that they know there is another choice.

Every child embodies the hope for our future. It is our children, in their purity and their innocence, that hope is born again in an increasingly cynical world. Abortion is the great tragedy of our time. America is not a country of kings. America is not defined by any single geographic characteristic, by any single race or creed. America is an idea, a collection of high ideals, eloquently articulated, inscribed in our Constitution, and embodied on our institutions.

Abraham Lincoln, in pondering the profound wisdom and our founding fathers, wrote of them: "This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the universe. This was their lofty, and wise, and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to his creatures . . . In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on . . . They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. They erected a beacon to guide their children, and their children, and the countless myriads who would inhabit the Earth in other ages."

Mr. President, confronting the tragic figures on abortion I have previously cited, I cannot help but question whether we can continue on this course and maintain hope that the intrinsic value of every human life, that principle out of which all the rights of man flow, can survive. The Adoption Awareness Act represents one step in the effort toward restoring the sanctity of life as the foundation of our system of human rights.

A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, today is an anniversary that almost no one will

recognize. It was 54 years ago today that the first nuclear explosion occurred at the Trinity Test Site in New Mexico. Mr. President, 54 years ago today we saw the first nuclear explosion on the face of the Earth. At that time, of course, we developed nuclear weapons because we were locked in a life and death struggle with the Axis powers. We developed nuclear weapons to end the most destructive war the world had ever seen, the Second World War. We then got involved in a cold war with the Soviets and we saw the buildup of thousands and thousands of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, warheads, and delivery vehicles.

I want to tell you what President Dwight D. Eisenhower said towards the end of his term about the spread of nuclear weapons. He said not achieving a test ban—that is, a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons—“would have to be classified as the greatest disappointment of any administration of any decade of any time and of any party.” That belief, expressed by President Eisenhower, was echoed by President John F. Kennedy, who stated that a comprehensive nuclear test ban would “increase our security; it would decrease the prospects of war.” He said, “Surely this goal is sufficiently important to require our steady pursuit.”

That was the late 1950s and the early 1960s. We still do not have a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in force, but we are close. Almost 3 years ago, this country, the United States, along with over 100 nations, signed a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The President sent that treaty to the Senate 662 days ago. What has happened? What has been done with that treaty? Nothing. Not a hearing. Not a minute, not an hour, not a day of hearings, not one hearing on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The only way another country in this world who wants to develop nuclear weapons can have some guarantee that they have nuclear weapons that work is if they can test them. That is true of China; it is true of any other country. A test ban treaty in which this country provides leadership, signs and ratifies it, is a significant step towards removing the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons around the world. We ought to do this. We ought to be able to do it soon.

I used a chart on the floor of the Senate recently in which I showed the number of days it took to ratify treaties. No treaty that I am aware of languished here for over 600 days except this treaty.

We have a responsibility to lead in this country with respect to this treaty, and we are not leading. This treaty is before the Senate. The committee has a responsibility to hold a hearing and give the Senate the opportunity to debate the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. There is precious little discussion about it. No one seems to know it is here. It has been here almost 2 years.

Next week, several of my colleagues and I are going to hold a press conference to announce the results of a recent bipartisan poll that will demonstrate, once again, overwhelming support for this treaty. This chart shows the support all across this country from last year's poll. Overwhelmingly, the American people support a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

It has been negotiated, it has been signed, but it has not been ratified. Why? Because it was sent to the Senate over 600 days ago and there has been no debate about it, no discussion of it to speak of, and there has not been 1 minute of hearings held on this treaty. This Senate ought to have the opportunity to debate and to vote on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

I reach back to President Eisenhower to make the case only because I want to demonstrate how long the desire for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty has been around—decade after decade.

Most recently, when India and Pakistan detonated nuclear weapons, virtually under each other's chins—and these are countries that do not like each other much—it should have sent a signal to all of us that we need to be concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. How do we manifest concern? By expressing leadership. How do we express leadership? By bringing a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that has been negotiated and signed before this body for ratification.

I yield the floor.

TOP AMERICAN HOSPITALS IN COLORADO

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, over the course of the last week the Senate has examined at great length many of health care's problems in America. On the floor we have discussed various legitimate problems and anecdotal horror stories to such an extent that I fear we may have obscured what is positive about health care in the United States.

Each year US News and World Report magazine recognizes American hospitals that practice health care that all Americans can be proud. These hospitals perform at the very highest levels, demonstrating excellence in general care and specific areas of medical specialty. This year the magazine analyzed each of our nation's 6,299 hospitals, and I am proud to rise today to recognize a number of hospitals from my home state of Colorado that have been recognized by US News and World Report for their outstanding work.

In Colorado we have long understood the value these fine institutions bring to their communities, our state, and the Rocky Mountain region.

I would like to recognize Children's Hospital in Denver, ranked 12th nationally in the specialty of Pediatrics, and 2nd in the Western Region.

I would like to recognize Craig Hospital in Denver, ranked 5th nationally

in the specialty of Rehabilitation, and 2nd in the Western Region.

I would like to recognize University Hospital in Denver, ranked 37th nationally in the specialty of Ear Nose and Throat, 4th in the Western Region; ranked 23rd nationally in the specialty of Rheumatology, 4th in the Western Region; and ranked 15th nationally in the specialty of Rehabilitation, and 4th in the Western Region.

Finally, I would like to salute National Jewish in Denver, for their overall number one ranking as the finest American hospital for Respiratory Disorders.

I know I speak for all Coloradans when I say that I am thankful to have these fine institutions in our state.

I congratulate Children's Hospital, University Hospital, Craig Hospital and National Jewish for this recognition of their exemplary work.

A MILITARILY STRONG ISRAEL

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I have been very encouraged in recent days by the peace offensive initiated by the new government of Ehud Barak in Israel. The people of Israel long for peace. The new Prime Minister, in his first few days in office, has been energetically trying to lay the groundwork for a secure, lasting peace in the Middle East. I applaud his efforts and trust that Prime Minister Barak's actions will be fully discussed and carried forward in his upcoming talks in Washington during the next week.

While I applaud these steps toward peace, I also believe it is imperative that, at the same time, Israel remain militarily strong. The only way a durable peace will be successfully negotiated and maintained in this dangerous but vital region of the world is if Israel deals from a strong hand. Even if Israel is successful in reaching an accommodation with its closest neighbors, it will continue to face very serious strategic threats from Iran, Iraq, and Libya for the foreseeable future.

To counter these terrorist states which possess weapons of mass destruction and lie within easy striking distance of Israel's homeland, it is critical that Israel have an effective strategic strike capability that will provide effective deterrence. To do this and to move simultaneously forward in implementing the Wye River Agreement and pursuing peace initiatives with its neighbors, Israel will need more military assistance funding for aircraft purchases from the United States.

In this regard, I recently came across a thoughtful Lexington Institute Issue Brief, authored by well-known defense strategist Loren Thompson, “Bolstering Israel's Strategic Air Power Serves America's Interests.” In this essay, Dr. Thompson argues that helping Israel to increase its military strength at this time not only will help Israel and further Middle East peace but also help protect America's interests in the region, especially since the