

the people, and for the people." By passing this legislation, we will give the Government back to its original owners.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support S. 2139.

I express my appreciation to the Senator from California for fitting me in between her comments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

Mr. CRAPO. I thank the Senator from California for allowing me to take a few moments to address the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD E. DIXON

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to make a statement in recognition of one of my very close friends out in Idaho who has just had a wonderful accomplishment in his life. He is a neighbor, a friend, and a member of my staff from Idaho, Don Dixon.

On March 24, Don will be given the distinct honor of induction into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame. The honor reflects his commitment to farming in Idaho and the respect and esteem in which he is held in our community. I know you join eastern Idaho and myself in extending to Don congratulations on this achievement.

Don is a lifelong farmer and resident of Idaho Falls, ID. He owns and tends the farm his grandfather purchased in 1900 and, thereafter, was owned by his father. Apparently, the farming bug hit Don hard because he took over the Dixon operation with his brother soon after college and his military service. A measure of his success is reflected by his continued expansion of the farm and livestock and the handover of a solid operation to his son.

For years, Don's work has produced some of the region's best potatoes, in a State that has the world's finest spuds, cattle, hay, and grain. In this time of agriculture distress and low prices, Don has demonstrated himself to be a model farmer by taking steps to protect the environment by undertaking the best management practices and water conservation through improved irrigation techniques. We can all be proud of his work to be a productive member of the agriculture community and a good steward of the land.

Although his induction into the Hall of Fame is a special accomplishment, Don has long been chosen as a representative of his community. He has been an active member of eastern Idaho's business and agriculture organizations for as long as I can remember. Don has served on the board of the Eastern Idaho State Fair and, for 6 years, served on the Idaho Potato Commission, a post nominated by our Governor. His recognition at the national

level is evident from Don's successes as Director of the National Potato Promotion Board.

In 1995, Don joined my staff and served with distinction through the balance of my House tenure, working on agriculture and natural resources issues. He was instrumental in my work with farmers and ranchers throughout the State during the debate on the 1996 farm bill. When I was elected to the Senate in 1998, Don agreed to continue our partnership by becoming my State Director of Agriculture, a position he has fulfilled with distinction and widely-held respect.

Don has served the people of Idaho above and beyond the call of duty, meeting more farmers and community leaders than any of his peers and probably has logged enough miles on his pickup truck to circumnavigate the world several times. The patience and understanding of his wife Georgia, his four children, and extended family for his work is a testament to Don's commitment to service and leadership in eastern Idaho's agriculture community.

Don's generosity and good-natured approach to life and work is also reflected in his induction into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame. He is a valued counselor and friend of my entire family. I salute him on the accomplishment of this high honor. I know you and my colleagues in the Senate join me in offering our congratulations to Don Dixon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues who were able to work out time back and forth on various issues.

NOMINATIONS OF MARSHA BERZON AND RICHARD PAEZ

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I had the privilege to address the Senate for about 15 minutes on the quality of two wonderful Ninth Circuit court nominees who are coming up for cloture votes today at 5 o'clock. I am very hopeful we can, in fact, shut off debate on this and get to the votes themselves tomorrow.

These are two excellent people, wonderful human beings, wonderful family members. Their families and they have gone through a difficult time because they have been kind of twisting in the wind—for 2 years, in Marsha's case; in Richard's case, for 4 years—while awaiting this moment. I hope if they are watching today, they feel as optimistic as do I that hopefully it is going to have a happy ending.

CEDAW

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today is International Women's Day. To all you women out there, and men who care about women, happy International Women's Day.

I think it is very fitting on International Women's Day to discuss a treaty this Senate should ratify, but has not ratified in over 20 years. This treaty, signed by President Carter, almost made it to the Senate floor some 6 years ago when it was voted favorably out of the Foreign Relations Committee. Unfortunately, it was never brought up. The treaty is called CEDAW. It stands for the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

This is a treaty that has been nicknamed the Magna Carta for women because it essentially gives basic human rights to women all over the world. That is why 165 nations, all of our allies and friends in the world, have in fact ratified it. But we haven't ratified it. One might say, well, who hasn't ratified it? I am sorry to say, we are standing with such stalwarts of democracy as Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Somalia. We don't belong in that company. This country is, in fact, a leader of human rights. It is really an embarrassment that we have not brought that treaty to the Senate floor.

I wrote a resolution that calls on the Senate to ask the Foreign Relations Committee to hold a hearing on CEDAW. It now has 25 cosponsors, including Republicans. It is very simple. It expresses the sense of the Senate that the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations—that is a committee on which I serve—should hold hearings, and the Senate should act on CEDAW, should take action on this convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. The resolution goes through why this treaty is so important. It talks about how important it is that CEDAW be enacted: because it would help give women equal rights, equal opportunity, equal education; it would help them get protection against violence. We know that happens all over the world where women don't have equal rights. And it would give us the clout, if you will, the portfolio to be stronger as a world leader.

The bottom line of this is that today I asked the Democratic leadership to ask unanimous consent to bring this resolution that I wrote to the floor. The resolution doesn't say ratify this convention. It simply says to the Foreign Relations Committee, please hold hearings.

It was objected to by the other side of the aisle because they don't want to have this hearing. I will discuss that because it is with great respect that I bring up these differences between the two sides of the aisle. The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, with whom I have a wonderful relationship, a very good working relationship, took to the floor of the Senate today. He unequivocally stated—and when he wants to be unequivocal, he can—that he will not hold hearings on the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. And he explained why. I totally respect his right to have this

view, but I will paraphrase the reasons he gave as to why he doesn't want to hold hearings on this. I will offer another view.

First, he said he wasn't going to hold hearings because there are radical groups behind this treaty.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD a list of the organizations that have endorsed the women's convention.

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

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ENDORSED THE WOMEN'S CONVENTION (PARTIAL LIST)

Action for Development

*American Association of Retired Persons
 *American Association of University Women
 *American Bar Association
 American College of Nurse-Midwives
 American Council for the United Nations University
 American Federation of Teachers
 *American Friends Service Committee
 *American Jewish Committee
 *American Nurses Association
 American Veterans Committee
 Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.
 *Amnesty International USA
 Association for Women in Development
 Association for Women in Psychology
 Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith
 *Baha'is of the United States
 Black Women's Agenda
 *B'nai B'rith International
 Bread for the World
 *Business and Professional Women/USA
 BVM Network for Women's Issues
 Catholics for A Free Choice
 Center for Advancement of Public Policy
 Center for Policy Alternatives
 Center for Reproductive Law and Policy
 Center for Women's Global Leadership
 Center of Concern
 Chicago Catholic Women
 Church of the Brethren, Washington Office
 *Church Women United
 Coalition on Religion & Ecology
 Coalition for Women in International Development
 Columban Fathers' Justice & Peace Office
 Commission on the Advancement of Women/InterAction
 D.C. Statehood Solidarity Committee
 Earthcommunity Center
 Eighth Day Center for Justice
 Episcopal Church
 *Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
 *Feminist Majority Foundation
 Francois Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights
 Friends of the U.N.
 *Friends Committee on National Legislation
 *General Federation of Women's Clubs
 Global Commission to Fund the UN
 Gray Panthers
 Guatemala Human Rights Commission
 Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America
 Health & Development Policy Project
 Human Rights Advocates
 Human Rights Watch/Women's Rights Division
 The Humane Society
 International Center for Research on Women
 International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
 International Human Rights Law Group
 International Women's Health Coalition
 International Women's Human Rights Law Clinic
 International Women Judges Foundation
 The J. Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

*Jewish Women International
 Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.
 Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
 *Leadership Conference of Women Religious
 *League of Women Voters of the United States
 Louisville Women-Church
 Maryknoll Mission Association of the Faithful
 Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
 Massachusetts Women-Church
 Na'amat USA
 *National Association of Commissions for Women
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Association of Women Lawyers
 National Audubon Society
 National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
 National Coalition of American Nuns
 *National Council of Negro Women
 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
 National Council of Women of the USA
 *National Council of Women's Organizations
 *National Education Association
 National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council
 National Women's Conference Committee
 *NOW Legal Defense & Education Fund
 NETWORK—A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
 Older Women's League
 Oxfam America
 Planned Parenthood Federation of America
 *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Washington Office
 Psychologists for Social Responsibility
 Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights
 San Francisco Bay Area Women's Ordination Conference
 *Sierra Club
 Sisterhood is Global Institute
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
 Soka Gakkai International—USA
 Society for International Development/Women in Development
 *Soroptimist International of the Americas
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations
 *Unitarian Universalist Association, Washington Office
 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
 United Church of Christ Office for Church and Society
 *United Methodist Church
 *United Nations Association of the United States of America
 United States Committee for UNICEF
 United States Committee for UNIFEM
 Washington Office on Africa
 Winrock International
 Woman's National Democratic Club
 Women Empowering Women of Indian Nations (WEWIN)
 Women of Reform Judaism
 Women for International Peace and Arbitration
 Women for Meaningful Summits
 Women Law and Development International
 *Women's Action for New Directions/Women Legislators Lobby
 Women's Environment and Development Organization
 Women's Institute for Freedom of The Press
 *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
 Women's Legal Defense Fund
 Women's Ordination Conference
 World Citizen Foundation
 *World Federalist Association
 *YWCA of the U.S.A.
 *Active National Membership Organizations.

Mrs. BOXER. With the Chair's indulgence, I will read to the Senate just a

few of these organizations. I want the Senate to decide if these organizations are radical or in any way not in the mainstream of thought. These are just some of the organizations that say, yes, the United States should ratify this treaty to end all forms of discrimination against women: the American Association of Retired Persons; the American Association of University Women; the American Jewish Committee; Amnesty International USA; the Baha'is of the United States; the Black Women's Agenda; the B'nai B'rith International; Business and Professional Women USA; Chicago Catholic Women; Church of the Brethren, Washington Office; Church Women United; Episcopal Church; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Hadassah; Human Rights Watch; The Humane Society; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; Leadership Conference of Women Religious; National Association of Commission for Women; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence; the National Coalition of American Nuns; the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA; the National Council of Women's Organizations; the Presbyterian Church, Washington Office; the Soroptimist International of the Americas; the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; the Unitarian Universalist Association, Washington Office; the United Methodist Church; the Women's Legal Defense Fund; and the YWCA of the United States of America.

I don't mind debating an issue on its merits, its demerits, its flaws, its problems. But to come to the Senate floor and say the people behind this convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women are radicals is simply not a fact in evidence, unless you think Hadassah is radical or the nuns are radical or all these churches and organizations are radical. They are far from radical. They are mainstream America. Mainstream America supports this, and we can't get a hearing because our chairman believes these groups are radical.

I understand some tactics have been used to get the chairman's attention to hold this hearing that he does not appreciate. And that is his right. But I beg my chairman to look past that and understand that these groups are in the mainstream of America. America should be in the leadership and out front on this issue. So the first point he made, I do not agree with, that radicals are behind this treaty.

Secondly, his other argument was that signing this international treaty would interfere with our sovereignty; in other words, it would interfere with us as lawmakers to do our job, would interfere with our laws. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have thousands of international treaties of which we are a part. They are all in this book. I won't put this in the RECORD because it would cost too much to print, but it is page after page with almost every civilized country. We

have treaties with them on all kinds of things—on science, on military aid, on human rights.

I will give you a couple that we signed on human rights. We are a party to a number of human rights treaties. One in particular is the U.N. Convention Against Torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment. We ratified that in 1990. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was ratified in 1992. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ratified in 1994.

So to say that these treaties will interfere with us just doesn't make any sense. Again, it is just not a fact in evidence.

The third reason my chairman says he doesn't want to hold a hearing is that he believes the whole purpose of this convention is to grant women the right to choose. In other words, in his opinion, this whole thing is about abortion rights. I want to say again how off the mark I think that suggestion is. When the committee voted this convention out for ratification 6 years ago, there was a big debate on this matter. What the committee did—by the way, I will support it overwhelmingly—it said this treaty and this convention is abortion neutral. It specifically said it "does not create or reflect an international right to abortion or sanction abortion as a means of family planning." It goes on, "We don't endorse it as a means of family planning," et cetera. The understanding states that "nothing in the convention reflects or creates a right to abortion" and that "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning."

So these issues that the chairman of the committee has raised, in my opinion, are straw men, or straw people, or straw women. They are not fact. The fact is, when we voted out this convention 6 years ago, we specifically stated it had nothing to do with abortion. The fact is that 165 nations have passed this, and we are standing with the most retrograde, rogue states in our opposition to it. There are thousands and thousands of treaties that do not interfere with our rights of sovereignty. The fact is that it has nothing to do with abortion. The most mainstream groups—and I have read some of them to you, and they are all that way—are behind this treaty and are working very hard to get it done.

Now, 21 years ago, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a treaty. Twenty years ago, President Carter signed the treaty. So it is really long overdue. I don't want to stand with Iran, Sudan, Somalia, and North Korea, as the rare nations who have not ratified this. I think it is a disgrace that we are not a party to this treaty. We know since 1981, when it entered into force, it has had a positive impact on the countries that have signed it. One such example is constitutional reform in Brazil, which brought significant guarantees

of women's human rights, and CEDAW provides the framework for articulating these rights.

There are many other wonderful things that have happened worldwide as a result of this treaty. Other nations have copied word for word from the treaty the kinds of rights they are going to give women in their nations. We have an important book, "Bringing Equality Home," which shows how many good things have happened because of that.

You might say, Senator BOXER, why does America have to act if these good things are happening? The fact is, we have to act because we should be proud that all of the things in this treaty we already do in our country. So we should be a leader, not a follower, on this. And we need that portfolio because when there is a case of a country that is not doing right by its women—and let me give you a case in point. There was a case in Kuwait where women were struggling to get the right to vote. It was a big brouhaha, and everybody thought, my goodness, we came to their assistance in the gulf war, they are going to follow suit and women will get the right to vote. Guess what happened. They did not. We were pressing them so hard, but I bet they turned to our negotiator and said, "Wait a minute, why should we listen to you, you aren't even a party to the CEDAW treaty." It takes away our ability to lead for equal rights for women because we have not yet ratified.

I am very hopeful that Senator HELMS will have a change of heart on this, although I believe he does hold strong views. But today I learned that Congressman Gilman, who is the Republican chair of the committee called the House International Relations Committee, has agreed to hold hearings on this treaty.

The fact is, it is our business, our work, our job. We are the ones who should be doing it. Although I am very pleased that the House is going to have the hearing—and I hope I can get over there and testify. But I think we should have our own hearings. After all, we have 25 Members of the Senate who were on this. I will read you the list of Senators who have gone on this, asking for hearings on this: Senators MURRAY, MIKULSKI, COLLINS, SNOWE, ROBB, WELLSTONE, BIDEN, LAUTENBERG, KENNEDY, SARBANES, CLELAND, Bob GRAHAM, Jack REED, LINCOLN, FEINSTEIN, LANDRIEU, FEINGOLD, DURBIN, DASCHLE, LEAHY, DODD, BINGAMAN, TORRICELLI, KERRY, and SPECTER.

We have many Republicans and many Democrats. I honestly think that if everyone knows about this resolution—and I will work hard on that—we will get some more. We now have a quarter of the Senate on record asking for hearings on CEDAW. My view is, since it was voted out favorably 6 years ago by the committee on a bipartisan vote of 13-5, we ought to do it again and get it moving and bring it down here for debate.

Women deserve equal rights, voting rights, human rights. They deserve to be protected from violence, either in their own homes or walking down the street. They should be protected against institutional violence. We have seen things that go on in Africa with operations that are forced upon women. It is very important that for us to lead in the world, we must be a leader on this treaty.

Again, I say to my friends on the other side who oppose this, I respect your right to oppose it. But, my goodness, what about having a hearing on it so we can listen to both sides? I think women in this country are waking up to this fact. There are so many issues we deal with every day. The women in my State are dealing with making it home in time to greet their children coming home from school or who are in day care. Their husbands are also working and putting dinner on the table and planning all the things they plan for their families. They are balancing their lives with their jobs. Do you know what? They care about this.

I have had meetings with many women who care about this because we are on this Earth right now and we have to try to make it a better world. We can't stop every evil, that is for sure; we know that. But we can stand for equal rights and human rights for people all over the world. We can stand up and say in certain countries women are treated like second-class citizens and, in some cases, not even third-, fourth-, or fifth-class citizens; they are treated like property. They have no respect. I just believe this great Nation of ours has come a long way to have the equality we have. Sometimes I look at the young women here and I think: Do you really know what it was like before women had equality?

Do you know what it was like when I went to get a job on Wall Street after graduating from college and was told: Women don't work here? The most shocking thing about it was that I said OK. And I packed up my bag and left. I didn't even argue with them. It was a given. There were only certain jobs for women.

I had to study to pass my test as a stockbroker on my own without the benefit of anyone. Once I got my licensing back, I said: Now, can I please be a stockbroker, and bring commission to this brokerage house, by the way? Well, all right, but just do it quietly. We want to make it look like you are a secretary. Those were tough days. It wasn't that long ago. I know I am old, but I am not that old. We faced that kind of discrimination.

Women could not vote until 1920. People look around here and say: Why aren't there more women? Believe me. I say that every day. But the bottom line is we didn't get to vote until 1920. We weren't used to power—not even the power to vote until the 1920s. We are learning how to deal with it now. But it takes time. Why shouldn't the world learn from our experience? What

we know to be a fact and evident is that women are equal. By the way, it doesn't mean we are better. We are equal. We are equally good in some cases and equally bad in some cases—not better. But we know that and we respect that in this country, although I would still like to see the equal rights amendment be part of the Constitution. But basically we know that. We should take that knowledge and that commitment, and make sure the women of the world have a chance at life. I think we can do it through this treaty. I would think we would be proud to do it across the party line.

I think this is going to become an issue in this election because there is no reason why we shouldn't at least hold a hearing and debate these issues.

The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee was down here today. He was eloquent in his opposition. Now I am on the floor and he is not here. I hope I have been a little eloquent on why we should pass the treaty. Why not bring that debate inside the Foreign Relations Committee where it belongs? Why not hear from Senators on both sides who care about this one way or the other? Why not vote it out? Why not come to the floor and have a good debate on these issues, and perhaps elevate the Senate? We get into our petty quarrels. Sometimes we take up issues that are, frankly, not as important as others. This one would be one that I think would make us all proud, whenever we come out on this matter and on this question. But in terms of the arguments against it, I hope I have put the other side out on the table.

Good people are behind this treaty—good, mainstream American groups. The treaty is a Magna Carta for women. We ought to be proud of it. We ought to stand with the countries in the world that are civilized, that give their women equal rights and fair rights. We ought to stand with them. It is time we do it.

It is International Women's Day. I will end where I started with happy International Women's Day. I hope when we think about this perhaps in the next few days and weeks and months, we will factor in a very important treaty—the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—on the floor of the Senate for a high-level debate and a vote.

Thank you very much Mr. President. I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

CEDAW HEARING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me thank the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, for raising the issue that today is International Women's Day—it is a very important day for women around the world and their rights—and to thank her for her work on the resolution asking the Foreign Relations Committee to hold a hearing on CEDAW, which is a very important resolution. It is time that we as a Senate hear what is involved and have a chance to get testimony and to possibly move forward on it. It would be a great step forward.

PIPELINE SAFETY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to publicly thank my colleague from the State of Washington, Mr. GORTON, for endorsing my bill, S. 2004, the Pipeline Safety Act of 2000. I am delighted Senator GORTON joined with me on this very important public safety issue. Senator GORTON has the respect of many in the Senate leadership, and I expect he will be a great help in helping us pass this pipeline safety bill. I look forward to working with him to make sure that the tragedies he talked about today—such as the one that occurred in Bellingham, WA—don't happen again.

I also wish to take a moment to recognize the efforts of many, many people in my home State of Washington—especially the mayor of Bellingham, Mark Asmundson, who has done more than anyone I know to raise public awareness about pipeline dangers and to call for stronger safety measures.

I encourage my colleagues, many of whom I have met personally over the last several months on this issue, to take this opportunity now to join Senator GORTON and me in helping to ensure the safety of the pipelines that transport natural gas, oil, and other hazardous liquids throughout our communities.

Since 1986, there have been more than 5,700 pipeline accidents nationwide. These accidents have killed 325 people and injured another 1,500. Three of those people died in Bellingham, WA, last June. We want to make sure we take steps this year to ensure that does not happen again to any other community. It is time to act. It is time to prevent another disaster.

My bill, S. 2004, would expand State authority. It would improve inspection practices, a move that is drastically needed. It would expand the public's right to know.

For any of you who may suffer from a disaster in the future, you will quickly find that your communities and cities won't have the ability to ask pipeline companies whether pipelines have been inspected, and what problems

there are, or actions they have taken to solve those problems, unless we pass the public's "right-to-know provision." It will improve the quality of pipeline operators, and it will increase funding to improve safety.

I look forward to working with the rest of the Washington State delegation to put the lessons that we learned all too tragically in Bellingham, WA, into law.

I ask my colleagues, many with whom I have met, to again take a look at this legislation and join us in sponsoring it, and for this Senate and Congress to move on this very important piece of safety legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

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. 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.

THE FAA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes at this time to congratulate the majority leader, Chairman JOHN MCCAIN, Senator SLADE GORTON, Representative BUD SHUSTER, and everyone in Congress who has worked so hard to produce a conference report on the FAA. Many of my colleagues have discussed the importance of this bill to our national aviation infrastructure, so I will not repeat now their comments. It is my purpose to remark to the Senate how important this bill is to my State of Alaska.

Mr. President, 75 percent of Alaska's communities are accessible only by air. We have enormous needs and, frankly, those needs have often taken a back seat to major metropolitan areas of the lower 48. It is my hope this bill will address some of those inequities, and I congratulate my Congressman, DON YOUNG, for his hard work on this bill.

We have 71 unlighted airports in Alaska. In an area where we spend half of our year in darkness, those airports are unlighted. One hundred and fifty airports in my State are less than 3,300 feet in length. More than half of our rural airports are without minimal passenger shelters. You reach the airport, get off the airplane, and there is literally nothing there. One hundred and seventy-six public use airports do not have basic instrument approach capability, and 194 locations in Alaska lack adequate communication, navigation, and surveillance.

This bill does not address all of those needs, and I hope to work with the Members of the House and Senate on the Appropriations Committee to fill a few of those gaps. This is a classic case in which some congressional earmarking is appropriate because the national administration too often has