

Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COVERDELL:

S. 2231. A bill to provide for the placement at the Lincoln Memorial of a plaque commemorating the speech of Martin Luther King, Jr., known as the "I Have A Dream" speech; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. L. CHAFEE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LUGAR, and Ms. SNOWE):

S. 2232. A bill to promote primary and secondary health promotion and disease prevention services and activities among the elderly, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to add preventive benefits, and for other purpose; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FITZGERALD (for himself, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. KOHL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Mr. GRAMS):

S. 2233. A bill to prohibit the use of, and provide for remediation of water contaminated by, methyl tertiary butyl ether; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WARNER:

S. 2234. A bill to designate certain facilities of the United States Postal Service; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. DODD, Mr. TORRICELLI, and Mr. HUTCHINSON):

S. 2235. A bill to amend the Public Health Act to revise the performance standards and certification process for organ procurement organizations; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. FRIST (for himself and Mr. DODD):

S. 2236. A bill to establish programs to improve the health and safety of children receiving child care outside the home, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRAIG:

S. 2237. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deductibility of premiums for any medigap insurance policy of Medicare+Choice plan which contains an outpatient prescription drug benefit, and to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide authority to expand existing medigap insurance policies; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BAUCUS:

S. 2238. A bill to designate 3 counties in the State of Montana as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas and authorize funding for drug control activities in those areas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 2239. A bill to authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to provide cost sharing for the endangered fish recovery implementation programs for the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River basins; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BUNNING:

S. 2240. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain polyamides; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAPO:

S. 2241. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to adjust wages and wage-related costs for certain items and services furnished in geographically reclassified hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THOMAS:

S. 2242. A bill to amend the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998 to improve the process for identifying the functions of the Federal Government that are not inher-

ently governmental functions, for determining the appropriate organizations for the performance of such functions on the basis of competition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CLELAND, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. JEFFORDS):

S. 2243. A bill to reauthorize certain programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 2244. A bill to increase participation in employee stock purchase plans and individual retirement plans so that American workers may share in the growth in the United States economy attributable to international trade agreements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 2245. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to modify the article description with respect to certain hand-woven fabrics; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOND (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2246. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue code of 1986 to clarify that certain small businesses are permitted to use the cash method of accounting even if they use merchandise or inventory; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BYRD:

S. 2247. A bill to establish the Wheeling National Heritage Area in the State of West Virginia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HELMS:

S. Res. 267. An original executive resolution directing the return of certain treaties to the President; placed on the Executive Calendar.

By Mr. EDWARDS (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. ROBB, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. KERREY):

S. Res. 268. A resolution designating July 17 through July 23 as "National Fragile X Awareness Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELMS:

S. Res. 269. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to United States relations with the Russian Federation, given the Russian Federation's conduct in Chechnya, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. Res. 270. An original resolution designating the week beginning March 11, 2000, as "National Girl Scout Week"; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. WELLSTONE (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. Res. 271. A resolution regarding the human rights situation in the People's Republic of China; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VOINOVICH:

S. Res. 272. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should remain actively engaged in southeastern Europe to promote long-term peace, stability, and prosperity; continue to vigorously oppose the brutal regime of Slobodan

Milosevic while supporting the efforts of the democratic opposition; and fully implement the Stability Pact; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. HATCH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BOND, Mr. ASHCROFT, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. HELMS, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. DOMENICI, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 273. A resolution designating the week beginning March 11, 2000, as "National Girl Scout Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REED:

S. Con. Res. 93. A concurrent resolution expressing the support of Congress for activities to increase public awareness of multiple sclerosis; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LOTT:

S. Con. Res. 94. A concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LOTT:

S. Con. Res. 95. A concurrent resolution commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Halabja massacre; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2225. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals a deduction for qualified long-term care insurance premiums, use of such insurance under cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements, and a credit for individuals with long-term care needs; to the Committee on Finance.

THE LONG-TERM CARE AND RETIREMENT SECURITY ACT OF 2000

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, long-term tax credits may seem like a dull topic. But the expenses of caring for an ailing family member are shocking. Millions of people bear these expenses every day, without any help.

Here's a typical example: A state legislator from Ohio named Barbara Boyd testified before my Special Committee on Aging last year. Ms. Boyd cared at home for her mother who had Alzheimer's disease and breast cancer. Her mother had \$20,000 in savings and a monthly Social Security check. That went quickly. Prescription drugs alone ran \$400 a month.

Antibiotics, ointments to prevent skin breakdown, incontinence supplies and other expenses cost hundreds of dollars a month. Ms. Boyd exhausted her own savings to care for her mother, and exhausted herself. She isn't complaining. Family caregivers don't complain. But we can and should use the tax code to ease their burden.

Yesterday a bipartisan group of legislators, and two prominent groups—AARP and the Health Insurance Association of America, announced a consensus agreement on a legislative package to help people with a variety of long-term care needs. Our bill contains a tax deduction to encourage individuals to buy long-term care insurance. We want to help people to prepare for their health needs in retirement.

The bill also contains a \$3,000 tax credit for family caregivers caring for a disabled relative at home. Under this legislation, Ms. Boyd's mother could have purchased long-term care insurance long before she developed Alzheimer's. In addition, Ms. Boyd could have used the tax credit to help with the costs of the medications and medical supplies for her mother.

I'm pleased that we have so much agreement in Washington about helping people with long-term care expenses. The legislators sponsoring this legislation have pushed for long-term care relief for years. Today, my colleagues and I will introduce this bill. We'll work to get it passed into law as soon as possible. An aging nation has no time to waste in preparing for long-term care. Family caregivers need immediate relief from their expensive and exhausting work.

Joining me in introducing this bill is Senator BOB GRAHAM of Florida, Representative NANCY JOHNSON, and Representative KAREN THURMAN.

By Mr. BAUCUS:

S. 2226. A bill to establish a Congressional Trade Office; to the Committee on Finance.

TO CREATE A CONGRESSIONAL TRADE OFFICE

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, last year I introduced a bill to create a Congressional Trade Office. That bill was designed to provide the Congress with new and additional trade expertise that would be independent, non-partisan, and neutral. Today, I am introducing the same bill with several small changes.

The role of Congress in trade policy has expanded in the few short months since I introduced my bill in September. We went through Seattle and the failure to launch a new multilateral trade round. The public is more interested in trade issues than ever before. There is a new urgency to reconcile labor and environmental issues with trade. We are on the cusp of seeing China enter the WTO with permanent Normal Trade Relations with the United States. The General Accounting Office has told us of the deficiencies in the Executive Branch in following trade agreements and monitoring compliance. And, for the first time, trade will be an issue in the Presidential campaign, as well as in Senate and House races.

Congress needs to be much better prepared. And that means we need access to more and better information, independently arrived, at from people whose commitment is to the Congress, and only to the Congress.

Congress has the Constitutional authority to provide more effective and active oversight of our Nation's trade policy. We must use that authority. Congress should be more active in setting the direction of trade policy. I believe strongly that we must re-assert Congress' constitutionally defined responsibility for international commerce.

A Congressional Trade Office would provide the entire Congress, through the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee, with this additional trade expertise. It would have three sets of responsibilities.

First, it will monitor compliance with major bilateral, regional, and multilateral trade agreements. Last week, along with Senator MURKOWSKI and several other Senators, I introduced the China WTO Compliance Act. That bill is designed to ensure continuing and comprehensive monitoring of China's WTO commitments. It is also designed to ensure aggressive Administration action to ensure compliance with those commitments. But that bill deals only with China. Congress needs the independent ability to look more closely at agreements with other countries. The Congressional Trade Office will analyze the performance under key agreements and evaluate success based on commercial results. It will do this in close consultation with the affected industries. The Congressional Trade Office will recommend to the Congress actions necessary to ensure that commitments made to the United States are fully implemented. It will also provide annual assessments about the agreements' compliance with labor and environmental goals.

Second, the Congressional Trade Office will have an analytic function. For example, after the Administration delivers its annual National Trade Estimates report, the NTE, to Congress, it will analyze the major outstanding trade barriers based on the cost to the US economy. It will also provide an analysis of the Administration's Trade Policy Agenda.

The Congressional Trade Office will analyze proposed trade agreements, including agreements that do not require legislation to enter into effect. It will examine the impact of Administration trade policy actions, including an assessment of the Administration's argument for not accepting an unfair trade practices case. And it will analyze the trade accounts every quarter, including the global current account, the global trade account, and key bilateral trade accounts.

Third, the Congressional Trade Office will be active in dispute settlement deliberations. It will evaluate each WTO decision where the US is a participant. In the case of a US loss, it will explain why it lost. In the case of a US win, it will measure the commercial results from that decision. It will do a similar evaluation for NAFTA disputes. Congressional Trade Office staff should participate as observers on the US delegation at dispute settlement panel meetings at the WTO.

The Congressional Trade Office is designed to service the Congress. Its Director will report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. It will also advise other committees on the impact of

trade negotiations and the impact of the Administration's trade policy on those committees' areas of jurisdiction.

The staff will consist of professionals who have a mix of expertise in economics and trade law, plus in various industries and geographic regions. My expectation is that staff members will see this as a career position, thus, providing the Congress with long-term institutional memory.

The Congressional Trade Office will work closely with other government entities involved in trade policy assessment, including the Congressional Research Service, the General Accounting Office, and the International Trade Commission. The Congressional Trade Office will not replace those agencies. Rather, the Congressional Trade Office will supplement their work, and leverage the work of those entities to provide the Congress with timely analysis, information, and advice.

Dispute resolution and compliance with trade agreements are central elements of US trade policy. The credibility of the global trading system, and the integrity of American trade law, depend on the belief, held by trade professionals, political leaders, industry representatives, workers, farmers, and the public at large, that agreements made are agreements followed. They must be fully implemented. There must be effective enforcement. Dispute settlement must be rapid and effective.

Often more energy goes into negotiating new agreements than into ensuring that existing agreements work. The Administration has increased the resources it devotes to compliance, and I support that. But an independent and neutral assessment in the Congress of compliance is necessary. It is unrealistic to expect an agency that negotiated an agreement to provide a totally objective and dispassionate assessment of that agreement's success or failure.

Looking at the WTO dispute settlement process, I don't think we even know whether it has been successful or not from the perspective of U.S. commercial interests. A count of wins versus losses tells us nothing. The Congressional Trade Office will give us the facts we need to evaluate this process properly.

Article I, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution says: "The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate commerce with foreign nations." It is our responsibility to provide oversight and direction on US trade policy. The Congressional Trade Office, as I have outlined it today, will provide us in the Congress with the means to do so.●

By Mr. BOND (for himself Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. ROBB, Mr. STEVENS, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2227. A bill to amend chapter 79 of title 5, United States Code, to allow

Federal agencies to reimburse their employees for certain adoption expenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ADOPTION
ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues in the House, Congressmen BLILEY and OBERSTAR and 42 other House Members, as well as Senators LANDRIEU, CRAIG, JEFFORDS, LINCOLN, JOHNSON, LIEBERMAN, JEFFORDS, ROBB, STEVENS, and WARNER, in introducing a bill to reimburse all federal employees up to \$2,000 for qualified expenses associated with the adoption of a child and for special-needs adoptions—the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act of 2000.

Every year, couples who are unable to have children of their own spend literally thousands of dollars to adopt a child. Statistics show that approximately 2.1 million couples in the United States are infertile. One of the main reasons for this is because couples are waiting longer to start a family in order to focus on careers. Many seek treatment to conceive a child, but are unsuccessful. For them, their only hope of having a child of their own is through adoption.

The adoption process demands an incredible amount of time and money and creates stress that can affect job performance. For this reason many private-sector businesses, such as Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Sprint, Prudential, Home Depot, and Freddie Mac, now provide financial assistance to employees adopting a child, thus increasing employee satisfaction, productivity, and loyalty and commitment to the employer. Unfortunately, the largest employer in the U.S.—the federal government—currently provides no financial assistance for adoption expenses to its employees. That is why I am introducing the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act.

This legislation would allow federal agencies to reimburse employees up to \$2,000 for all qualified expenses associated with the adoption of a child, including special-needs children. Any benefit paid by this legislation would come out of funds available for salaries and expenses of the relevant agencies. Currently, active-duty armed services personnel receive this adoption benefit, \$2,000 per adoption; however, no other branch of the federal government covers this expense.

A key aspect of adoption that is frequently overlooked, and that I have made sure is addressed in this legislation, is that of special-needs children. Recent estimates show there are currently around 110,000 special-needs children in foster care who are eligible for adoption. Many of these children have physical or mental disabilities and need extensive care and therapy. Another common situation is two or more siblings in need of a family willing to take on the responsibility of more than one child. Most of these children are currently in foster care waiting to find

a permanent home and family of their own, and are less likely to be adopted than non-special-needs children.

Often, couples who may already have children of their own are interested in opening their home and their hearts to adopt a child or children with special needs, but are hesitant to do so due to the costs involved. By providing an adoption reimbursement benefit, many couples already considering adopting special-needs children decide to go ahead with the process. The Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act broadens the adoption benefits package to include the costs associated with special-needs adoptions.

Mr. President, this is why I, along with numerous colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers, are introducing and advocating the passage of this legislation. Additionally, this bipartisan and bicameral bill has the endorsement of numerous adoption advocacy groups, including:

Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Covenant House, The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, The Edgewood Children's Center in St. Louis, Missouri, Family Voices, The National Adoption Center, The National Council for Adoption, The National Treasury Employees Union, and Voice for Adoption.

As a member of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I believe we should provide incentives to make sure that more children find loving parents. I thank my colleagues, Senators LANDRIEU, CRAIG, JEFFORDS, LINCOLN, JOHNSON, LIEBERMAN, JEFFORDS, ROBB, STEVENS, and WARNER, Congressmen BLILEY and OBERSTAR, and the numerous other House and Senate sponsors, as well as the many adoption advocacy groups, for joining me in promoting adoption and supporting our civil servants by cosponsoring and endorsing this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that additional material be printed in the RECORD.

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

BETHANY CHRISTIAN SERVICES,
Grand Rapids, MI, March 3, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND, I have read the draft of the Federal Employees Adoptions Assistance Act that you have proposed. On behalf of Bethany Christian Services, I express my support for this legislation.

Bethany is a national child welfare 501(c)3 organization and is located in 31 states. We place close to 1500 children for adoption each year and most of them have some form of "special need." The families that choose to adopt are typically in need of some form of financial assistance.

Thank you for your efforts to promote adoption with this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

GLENN DE MOTTS,
President.

DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION
FOR ADOPTION,
Dublin, OH, March 8, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: As you know, adoption is a personal thing for me. I was adopted when I was six weeks old, and if I hadn't had a family to care for me, I know, I wouldn't be where I am now. Today over 110,000 children in the United States foster care system are waiting to be adopted. I'd like to see them have the same chance that I had for a loving home and family. I support your efforts to help these children and the families who adopt them through the introduction of the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act of 2000.

Wendy's began to offer adoption assistance to our employees in 1990, and since then thirty-six employees have adopted. We discovered many advantages to offering adoption benefits. They are a highly valued part of employees' benefits and they make the process of building a family more fair. When a company offers adoptive parents financial assistance and leave comparable to maternity benefits, they are doing what is best for families—and employees appreciate it. Adoption benefits also provide an opportunity to give back to the community. By offering employers adoption benefits we are making it possible for more children to be adopted from the child welfare system. Through our work at Wendy's, we are reminded that building and supporting families is the right thing to do. It costs so little to make a tremendous difference in the lives of families and children.

We appreciate your hard work to ensure that this legislation covers a broader range of adoption related expenses. This is especially important because of the unique costs that families who adopt children with special needs incur.

Again, thank you for your efforts to encourage the federal government to join the growing number of employers who agree that adoption benefits make good business sense. We commend you for your leadership in this area and hope your fellow Members of Congress will support it.

Warm regards,

DAVE THOMAS,
Founder.

COVENANT HOUSE,
New York, NY, March 8, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER BOND,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: Covenant House is proud to be a supporter of the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act of 2000. I would like to have joined you for the actual announcement of this legislation but am unable to do so due to a previous commitment.

Each year, thousands of youth come to Covenant House lacking the support of a stable family and desperately in need of love and protection. This legislation will encourage federal employees to adopt youth who have this great need and hopefully set an example for employers throughout the nation to provide similar encouragement to their employees who want to adopt a youth. We know so many young people whose lives would have been turned around if only adoption could have been possible for them.

Thank you so much for drafting and sponsoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Sister MARY ROSE MCGEADY, D.C.,
President.

EDGEWOOD CHILDREN CENTER,
St. Louis, MO, February 16, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: As you know, at Edgewood Children's Center we often work with children whose own families are unable to care for them. Finding permanent families for those children is usually more of a priority than anything else we do.

The "Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act" will support an important group of potential parents in their desire to parent these and other children. Easing the financial burden of adoption will increase the pool of available families and make the way easier for those who choose this important step.

Thank for, once again, leading the way on behalf of kids. Know of our strong support of this bill and please let me know of anything we can do to be of assistance.

Most sincerely,

SUSAN S. STEPLETON,
Executive Director.

FAMILY VOICES,
Algodones, NM, February 9, 2000.

Senator CHRISTOPHER BOND,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: Family Voices is pleased to write in support of the "Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act" you have proposed. Family Voices, 30,000 members understand the delicate nature of our children with special needs have a loving home to grow up in and a nurturing family to support them.

We believe that any assistance that can be provided to help families adopt children with special needs is crucial. Today's changing health care environment and families concerns about growing costs may provide barriers to the adoption of our children with special needs. Your bill simply equals the playing field for our children with special needs and the families who wish to be apart of their lives. Our children deserve a nurturing environment and this bill will encourage adopting families to take a second look at our kids. You have truly addressed a need our children and their future families have and Family Voices stands behind your efforts.

Sincerely,

JULIE BECKETT,
National Policy Coordinator,
Family Voices, Inc.

MISSOURI COALITION OF
CHILDREN'S AGENCIES,
Jefferson City, MO, March 4, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: As you know, the Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies is the professional association representing sixty-five private child caring agencies in Missouri. The vast majority of these agencies spend a considerable portion of their time attempting to find permanent homes for the abused and neglected children in their care. This function is second only to providing a safe and caring environment for these children.

The "Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act" is a great step in providing an important potential group of adoptive parents for children in need of permanent homes. Anything we can do to increase the pool of potential adoptive families can only help increase the chances for the children who most need the love and stability of a permanent home. Reducing the financial burden of adoption is a great step forward for these potential families.

We truly appreciate your strong support of children. If there is anything our association or its individual members can do to help in this effort, please let me know.

Sincerely,

JOE KETTERLIN,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL ADOPTION CENTER,
Philadelphia, PA.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: For the past four years, the National Adoption Center has been in the forefront of encouraging employers to offer adoption benefits through its Adoption and the Workplace project. During this time, more than 125 employers have implemented benefits' policies, including financial reimbursement for adoption expenses. This support allows families to consider adoption as a viable option and to provide loving homes to children who need permanence.

The reaction of adoptive families who receive adoption benefits has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have spoken of their appreciation of their employer's efforts to provide fairness in relation to those who create families biologically and often express their gratitude through greater loyalty and commitment to their workplace.

We support the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act you are proposing as an effective way of providing financial reimbursement to employees interested in adopting and as a means of encouraging families to consider adoption as a family-building alternative. We feel that this legislation addresses the need for equity, recognizing that families who adopt have traditionally had no employer-supported financial benefits, unlike those who receive maternity coverage.

We commend you for this farsighted bill and urge your fellow legislators to support it.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN L. JOHNSON,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION,
Washington, DC, February 8, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: I reviewed the draft version of the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act that you have proposed and am in support of this legislation. As you know, the National Council For Adoption has taken the position of promoting adoption for the past 20 years. The Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act provides families with much needed financial assistance to defray the cost of certain adoption expenses. By providing this assistance, hopefully a number of strong families that would not otherwise have the financial ability to adopt a child will have the opportunity to provide a loving home to a child in need of a family.

As a supporter of companion legislation sponsored by Representative Tom Bliley and Representative James Oberstar, the National Council for Adoption supports your efforts to enact the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act into law this year.

Sincerely,

DAVID M. MALUTINOK,
President.

STATEMENT OF COLLEEN M. KELLEY, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION, IN SUPPORT OF THE FEDERAL ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ACT

The National Treasury Employees Union, which represents over 155,000 federal workers

in the Department of the Treasury, Department of Energy, Federal Communications Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Patent and Trademark Office and other agencies announces its strong support for the bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Kit Bond and Representative Tom Bliley to provide adoption assistance for federal employees.

Many federal employees are ready and willing to provide a loving home for a child in need. Sadly, significant financial barriers often exist particularly for the lower and middle grade public servants that make up the membership of our union. This legislation would lessen the financial burden these hopeful parents would bear as they take on the duties of providing love and care for a child in need of a home.

The federal government should set the example for employers everywhere in developing compassionate and socially responsible employment and benefit policies. NTEU asks that Congress move quickly on this important legislation.

VOICE FOR ADOPTION,
Washington, DC, February 9, 2000.

Hon. CHRISTOPHER BOND,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BOND: On behalf of Voice for Adoption (VFA), I applaud your efforts to help special needs children move from foster care to permanent loving homes. VFA supports the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act.

Founded in 1996, VFA has more than 70 national and local special needs adoption organizations as members. VFA participants include professionals, parents, and advocates committed to securing adoptive families for America's waiting children.

Our distinguished board of directors has more than two hundred years combined experience in the adoption field. VFA's board includes: North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), the National Adoption Center, Adoption Exchange Association (AEA) Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), Children Awaiting Parents (CAP), the Institute for Black Parenting, Three River Adoption Council, Spaulding for Children, Family Builders Adoption Network and The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. Our aim is to ensure permanent, nurturing families for our nation's most vulnerable children and to strengthen support for families who adopt.

In 1998, approximately 520,000 children were in out-of-home, foster, kinship, or residential care. The average age of these children in foster care is 9.5 year old. These children can expect to spend on average more than three years in the foster care system and be moved more than three different times during their stays.

The Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act, which allows up to \$2,000 reimbursement for adoption expenses, would encourage employees of the federal government to adopt who would not have been able to afford it otherwise.

Again, VFA applauds your leadership with this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

COURTENEY ANNE HOLDEN,
Executive Director.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues and to acknowledge the leadership of Senator BOND in introducing the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act of 2000.

Congress has repeatedly demonstrated strong support for adoption.

I think there is a clear consensus here that adoption is a positive experience—for children needing homes, for birth parents, and for adoptive parents, not to mention for society at large. In recent years, we have shaped federal policies so that they do more to help waiting children find permanent, loving families.

Now we have an opportunity to bring home our advocacy for adoption.

The Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act follows the lead of a growing number of private sector businesses in establishing an adoption benefit for employees. It is well known that family-friendly workforce policies help attract and retain qualified workers. While adoption benefits generate considerable good will and loyalty among employees, they cost little for employers, because they are relatively rarely used. Yet in view of what continues to be a huge price tag for adoption—in the tens of thousands of dollars—these benefits can truly make a difference in helping an employee choose this option for creating or expanding a family.

By implementing these policies for federal workers, we can underscore our strong message of support for adoption and encourage more private sector employers to do likewise. At the same time, we will be improving the competitiveness of the federal government in recruiting good workers and helping to increase current workers' job satisfaction and commitment.

The benefit that could be provided by the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act is by no means lavish, but it compares favorably with similar benefits in the private sector. This policy will be good for workers, good for the federal government, good for taxpayers, and—most important—good for the more than 100,000 children in this country who are eligible for adoption today but still awaiting a permanent, loving family.

I congratulate Senator BOND for bringing this initiative to the Senate and encourage all our colleagues to join us in working to pass this important legislation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the legislation that is being introduced by my friend and colleague from Missouri, Senator BOND. As Chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and a member of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I have been a long-standing supporter of legislation to make adoption easier. This bill does exactly that by requiring federal agencies to reimburse their employees up to \$2,000 for all qualified expenses associated with the adoption of a child. Both this bill and its House companion, introduced by Representatives TOM BLILEY and JAMES OBERSTAR last August, have gathered the support of a bipartisan group of legislators and numerous groups in the adoption community.

Currently, many private sector businesses provide financial assistance to

employees who wish to adopt a child. These businesses understand that adoption can be a very time-consuming, exhausting, and expensive process for parents. Relieving the financial burden on their employees will not only help encourage adoption, but also produce a happier and more productive work force.

The legislation being introduced today provides a benefit for our own hard-working federal employees. In the process, it brings the federal government up to par with those private-sector businesses that already provide financial assistance to employees adopting a child. Even further, it establishes a leadership role for the federal government in this area. This hopefully will encourage even more businesses to assist their employees financially should they wish to adopt a child.

I am proud to stand today with several of my colleagues as co-sponsors of the Federal Employees Adoption Assistance Act of 2000. I hope the Senate will proceed quickly to pass this legislation. It makes sense, both for the approximately 110,000 children currently awaiting adoption in the United States, and for those federal employees who are willing and able to provide a home for them.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, and Mr. GORTON):

S. 2228. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army to conduct studies and to carry out ecosystem restoration and other protective measures within Puget Sound, Washington, and adjacent waters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

PUGET SOUND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2228

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION. 1. PUGET SOUND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") shall conduct studies and carry out ecosystem restoration and other protective measures within Puget Sound, Washington, and adjacent waters and associated estuary and near-shore habitat, including—

- (1) the 17 watersheds that drain directly into Puget Sound;
- (2) Admiralty Inlet;
- (3) Hood Canal;
- (4) Rosario Strait; and
- (5) the eastern portion of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall use funds made available to carry out this section to carry out ecosystem restoration and other protective measures (including environmental improvements related to facilities of the Corps of Engineers in existence on the date of enactment of this Act) determined by the Secretary to be feasible based on—

(A) the studies conducted under subsection (a); or

(B) analyses conducted before such date of enactment by non-Federal interests.

(2) CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.—In consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and the Governor of the State of Washington, the Secretary shall develop criteria and procedures consistent with the National Marine Fisheries Service and State fish restoration goals and objectives for reviewing and approving analyses described in paragraph (1)(B) and the protective measures proposed in those analyses. The Secretary shall use prior studies and plans to identify project needs and priorities wherever practicable.

(3) PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECTS.—In prioritizing projects for implementation under this subsection, the Secretary shall consult with public and private entities active in watershed planning and ecosystem restoration in Puget Sound watersheds, including the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Northwest Straits Commission, the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, county watershed planning councils, and salmon enhancement groups, and shall give full consideration to their priorities for projects.

(c) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—In developing and implementing protective measures under subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary shall provide for public review and comment in accordance with applicable Federal law, including—

(1) providing advance notice of public meetings;

(2) providing adequate opportunity for public input and comment;

(3) maintaining appropriate records; and

(4) compiling a record of the proceedings of meetings.

(d) COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAW.—In developing and implementing protective measures under subsections (a) and (b), the Secretary shall comply with applicable Federal law, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(e) COST SHARING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Studies and technical assistance provided to determine the feasibility of protective measures under subsections (a) and (b) shall—

(A) be considered to be project costs; and

(B) be shared by non-Federal interests during project implementation in accordance with this subsection.

(2) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—Subject to paragraph (4), the non-Federal share of the cost of the protective measures shall be 35 percent; except that if a project would otherwise be eligible for cost-sharing under section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. 2294 note), the non-Federal share of the cost of the protective measures for the project shall be 25 percent.

(3) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—Not more than 80 percent of the non-Federal share may be provided in the form of services, materials, supplies, or other in-kind contributions necessary to carry out the protective measures.

(4) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of any single protective measure shall not exceed \$5,000,000.

(5) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.—The operation and maintenance of the protective measures shall be a non-Federal responsibility.

(6) TRIBAL COST-SHARING.—The Secretary shall waive the first \$200,000 in non-Federal cost share for all studies and projects co-sponsored by federally recognized Indian tribes.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to not

to exceed \$125,000,000 to pay the Federal share of the cost of carrying out this section.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. SARBANES, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. REID, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. BREAU, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DODD, Mr. CLELAND, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2229. A bill to provide for digital empowerment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Today, I introduce the Digital Empowerment Act. The goal of this legislation is to ensure that every child is computer literate by the eighth grade regardless of race, ethnicity, income, gender, geography, or disability.

Yesterday, the Senate's Education Committee voted for my amendment to establish this as our national goal. This vote was taken on a bipartisan basis and was unanimous. Today, I am introducing this legislation to make this goal a reality. This bill has been a team effort. I reached out to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, to my colleagues, the people throughout Maryland, ministers in Baltimore, business leaders, educators, and political leadership. Why? It is because a digital divide exists in America. Those who have access to technology and know how to use it will be ready for the new digital economy. Those who don't will be left out and left behind.

Low-income urban and rural families are less likely to have access to the Internet and computers. Black and Hispanic families are only two-fifths as likely to have Internet access as their white counterparts. Some schools have 10 computers in every classroom. In other schools, there are 200 students who share one computer. The private sector is doing important and exciting work, such as Power Up from AOL, but technology empowerment can't be limited to a few zip codes. What we need is a national policy and national programs.

Mr. President, I believe the best anti-poverty program is an education. If we practice the ABCs, we will ensure that our children have a good education and will cross this digital divide. Crossing the digital divide is about technology and about children having access to technology. It is about teachers knowing how to teach children the tools of technology so they can cross this digital divide.

The ABCs are simply this: Access—each child must have universal access to computers, whether it is in a school, a library, or a community center. Many families cannot afford to buy computers for their homes, but children in America should have access to them through public institutions.

We also need to practice the B—best-trained teachers and, I might add, better-paid teachers.

But C would be computer literacy for all students by the time they finish eighth grade.

My Digital Empowerment Act will, first of all, create a one-stop shop for Federal education technology programs at the Department of Education. Why do we need this? Well, right now, our programs are scattered throughout the Department. School superintendents have to forage to be able to find that information, and when they do, they find the funding is absolutely spartan or skimpy. That is why my legislation also improves our schools in terms of access to technology and teacher training.

Teachers want to help their students cross the digital divide, but they are facing three major problems. One, they need technology. They need hardware and software. They need training to use the technology because without training of the teachers or librarians, it is a hollow opportunity.

In my own home State of Maryland, over 600 teachers from across the State volunteered to participate in a tech-prep academy so they could be ready. But hundreds were turned away. For every one teacher who can sign up for tech-prep training, four or five are standing in line to do so.

My bill addresses these concerns. We are going to double funding for school technology and for teacher training. We now spend less than half a billion dollars on training and technology for our schools. We would double that to \$850 million. But we also have to make sure we go where children learn, and that is in the community. Right now, what we find is that the only reliable source of revenue for wiring schools and libraries is the E-rate. But, the E-rate does not go to community centers.

Whether it is an African-American church or a community center in an Appalachian region or rural parts of the South or the upper regions of Alaska, what my legislation would do is help community centers. My legislation would create an E-corps within the AmeriCorps national service program. It would bring AmeriCorps volunteers with special technology training into our schools and into our communities.

I recently had a town hall meeting in an elementary school in Riverdale, MD. The teachers and students told me they need extra pairs of hands to help out in the computer lab to be able to teach the children. Also, we want to create 1,000 community tech centers. Community leaders have told me we need to bring technology to where kids learn, not just where we want them to learn. Our legislation would create 1,000 community-based centers that would be run by community organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA, Urban League, or a faith-based organization, where children could be there for structured afterschool activities, and also adults could be there earlier in the day to develop their job skills.

Government cannot do this alone. We want public-private partnerships. I

want to use our Tax Code to encourage public-private partnerships. This bill uses our Tax Code to encourage the donations of technology, technology training, and technology maintenance for schools, libraries and community centers.

Mr. President, that is the core of our program. We are living in exciting times. The opportunities are tremendous to use technology to improve our lives, to use technology to remove the barriers caused by income, race, or ethnicity. Technology could mean the death of distance as a barrier for bringing jobs into the rural areas of our country. We want technology to be the death of discrimination where children have been left out or left aside. Bringing this technology into schools and libraries would enable children to leapfrog into the future.

Technology is the tool, but empowerment is the outcome. We want to be sure each child in the United States of America, by being computer literate by the time they are in the eighth grade, will be ready for the new economy. We hope that by setting that as a national goal we will get children to stay in school and know that the future lies in working in this new economy.

I thank everybody who worked on this bill with me. I thank everyone on my staff who helped me, including Julia Frifield, Jill Shapiro, and Andrea Vernot. This has truly been a team effort. I am pleased that I have 25 cosponsors from the U.S. Senate on this legislation. I hope that kind of bipartisan support will move this legislation forward.

I will conclude by saying this is a tremendous opportunity. This is not about a laundry list of new Government programs. We are here to make the highest and best use of the programs that exist, a wise and prudent use of taxpayer funds, and also to say to each child in America if you want to learn and get ready for the new economy, your Federal Government is on your side.

I give all praise and thanks to the Dear Lord who has inspired me to do this and gives me the opportunity to serve in the Senate. I truly believe one person can make a difference. I am trying to do that with this legislation. If we can work together, I know we will be able to bring about change—change for our children and change for the better.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to join Senator MIKULSKI in introducing the National Digital Empowerment Act, which seeks to close the gap between those who have technology available to them and those who do not. I commend Senator MIKULSKI for her commitment to connect every school and community to the Information Superhighway. The legislation we are introducing will help to achieve this goal. It will enable students and teachers in all communities to have access to computers, as well as the training that is necessary to use this technology effectively.