

Mr. Babitsky has worked for the last 10 years for the U.S. government-funded broadcasting service, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He is well-known as one of the most courageous reporters who has covered the conflict in Chechnya. The skill and courage he demonstrated in his coverage of the conflict are clearly the major reasons for his continuing plight.

Russian authorities repeatedly expressed displeasure with Mr. Babitsky's reporting of Russian troop casualties and Russian human rights violations against Chechen civilians in the weeks leading up to his arrest. On January 8, his Moscow apartment was ransacked by members of the Federal Security Service, the FSB, which is the successor organization to the KGB. They confiscated film alleged to contain photos of dead Russian soldiers in Chechnya.

On January 16, Mr. Babitsky was seized by Russian police in the Chechen battle zone. After first denying that he was in their custody, Russian authorities claimed that Mr. Babitsky had been assisting the Chechen forces and was to stand trial in Moscow.

On February 3, the Russian government announced that Mr. Babitsky had been handed over to Chechen units in exchange for Russian prisoners, a violation of the Geneva Convention to which Russia is a party. Subsequently, Russian authorities claimed to have no knowledge of Mr. Babitsky's whereabouts. As it turns out, he was taken to a so-called "filtration camp" for suspected Chechen collaborators, then held at an undisclosed location by Chechen forces loyal to Moscow.

On February 25, Mr. Babitsky was taken to the Republic of Dagestan and told he was about to be freed. But authorities said he was carrying false identity papers, and they arrested and jailed him. Mr. Babitsky says the papers were forced on him by his captors in Chechnya and used to smuggle him over the border.

Facing international pressure to account for Mr. Babitsky's whereabouts since his disappearance, Russian authorities flew Mr. Babitsky to Moscow and released him on his own recognition.

The allegations of assisting Chechen forces and carrying forged identity papers still stand against Mr. Babitsky. If convicted, he faces at least two years in prison on the identity papers charges alone. The State Department would like to see this case resolved. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is seeking to have all charges against Mr. Babitsky dropped, and I strongly support this effort.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to seek and to impart information through the media, regardless of frontiers. Taking into custody any reporter, and transferring him to the custody of hostile forces, is a serious human rights violation and behavior unbecoming a democracy.

I urge the newly-elected Russian President, Vladimir Putin, to demonstrate his commitment to the principles of democracy and respect for human rights and freedom of the press by seeing to it that the trumped-up charges against Mr. Babitsky are dropped.

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THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, March 28, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,733,741,907,422.83 (Five trillion, seven hundred thirty-three billion, seven hundred forty-one million, nine hundred seven thousand, four hundred twenty-two dollars and eighty-three cents).

Five years ago, March 28, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,849,996,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred forty-nine billion, nine hundred ninety-six million).

Ten years ago, March 28, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,051,947,000,000 (Three trillion, fifty-one billion, nine hundred forty-seven million).

Fifteen years ago, March 28, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,710,720,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred ten billion, seven hundred twenty million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 28, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$508,988,000,000 (Five hundred eight billion, nine hundred eighty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,224,753,907,422.83 (Five trillion, two hundred twenty-four billion, seven hundred fifty-three million, nine hundred seven thousand, four hundred twenty-two dollars and eighty-three cents) during the past 25 years.

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ELECTIONS IN SENEGAL

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the people of Senegal on their recent democratic presidential elections. On March 19, the citizens of Senegal selected a new leader, Abdoulaye Wade of the Senegalese Democratic Party, in run-off elections for the presidency. This election was not just for show. The Senegalese people were not simply going through the motions of political participation. Rather this was a remarkable moment in Senegalese and African history. After 40 years of Socialist Party rule, the Senegalese people peacefully and democratically took control of their country's destiny and chose to make a change.

I also want to acknowledge the behavior of incumbent President Abdou Diouf, who has held power for two decades. President Diouf lost the vote, but he won the respect of champions of democracy worldwide when he accepted the choice of the voters and gracefully congratulated Mr. Wade on his victory. The manner in which he leaves office will be one of the richest elements of his legacy.

Mr. President, so often the only news that Americans hear from Africa is

news of war and oppression, of flood and famine, of disease and drought. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Africa, I have often come to this floor to speak about abuses and conflicts in the sub-Saharan region. But I have also spent enough time learning about Africa to know that small victories are won each day—in cities and villages across the continent, individuals, families, and communities are making real progress in their quest for a better future. This month the people of Senegal won a truly great victory, and it is my pleasure to call this Senate's attention to their achievement.

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DEPOSIT INSURANCE FAIRNESS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, Senator JOHN EDWARDS and I introduced S. 2293, the Deposit Insurance Fairness and Economic Opportunity Act. Also joining in this effort are Senators JESSE HELMS, FRANK MURKOWSKI, and KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON.

This bill is a continuation of an effort begun last year during consideration of S. 900, the now Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. I offered an amendment on the Senate floor regarding the annual obligation that banks and thrifts pay into their respective deposit insurance funds to retire the debt on bonds issued by the Financing Corporation (FICO) in the late 1980s. This annual assessment for banks and thrifts totals nearly \$800 million. This money is used to support the federal deposit insurance system consisting of the Bank Insurance Fund [BIF] and the Savings Association Insurance Fund (SAIF).

By law, banks and thrifts are required to contribute the equivalent of 1.25 percent of their deposits into the insurance funds for it to be considered capitalized. Presently, and for the last several years, these funds have met—and exceeded—that statutory requirement. For example, the SAIF steadily increased from 1.25 percent in 1996 to 1.45 percent in 1999. Similarly, the BIF rose from 1.34 percent in 1996 to 1.37 percent in 1999.

Over time, this situation has evolved where banks and thrifts are required to meet the annual obligation despite an overcapitalization of the insurance funds. In short, this is money that is leaving our communities that could be used for expanded lending in the areas of home buying, small business start-ups, and educational expenses. According to a former Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation [FDIC] Commissioner, every dollar available for capital can yield \$10 in additional community lending. Therefore, it is projected that this bill could generate up to \$8 billion in new loans each year.

To achieve the goals of requiring the banking community to meet their financial obligation to the funds; maintain the safety and soundness of the deposit insurance funds; and allow needed dollars to remain in our communities,

Senator EDWARDS and I have proposed the following in S. 2293: (1) Raise the designated reserve ratio of the deposit insurance funds from the current 1.25 percent of assets to 1.4 percent of assets. This will provide an enhanced buffer in the deposit insurance funds to ensure their continued safety and soundness; (2) Allow funds in excess of the 1.4 reserve ratio to be used to pay the annual FICO obligation; (3) Allow money to be returned to banks and thrifts on a pro-rata basis when the debt is retired on the FICO bonds in 2017. As mentioned before, the BIF and SAIF are overcapitalized, and continue to grow since the funds are invested in government bonds and generate investment income. The legislation specifies that only when both BIF and SAIF exceed the 1.4 reserve ratio can the excess be used to pay the annual assessment.

I believe the approach set out in S. 2293 is one of common sense. Congress required the two deposit insurance funds to be capitalized at a set level. The mandate was accepted and met by the bank and thrift industries, and growth in the fund has led them to exceed the original requirements. This legislation simply affirms that banks and thrifts must continue to meet their statutorily-required financial obligation, and if the deposit insurance funds are healthy and sound, then such excess dollars can be kept in their communities.

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SUPREME COURT CASE OF DOE VERSUS SANTA FE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, among the greatest traditions in my state and in many parts of the country are high school football games on Friday nights. These are very important events each fall in the lives of students and their families in countless communities.

These athletic activities often include a simple, non-denominational prayer to set the tone for the evening, and to promote good sportsmanship and safety for the students. These prayers are beneficial to students and spectators alike. Recently, prayer at high school football games in a Texas public school district was challenged as unconstitutional. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held in a divided opinion that this practice violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. The case is being considered by the Supreme Court today, and it is my hope that the Court will reverse this misguided decision.

I have long believed that non-denominational prayer should be permitted in public schools. I believe that our society for years has been going too far in trying to create a complete separation between church and state. The fact is that religion has always been a central part in the lives of Americans, and each generation seeks to pass these values on to their children. The courts should recognize the

role of religion, and not try to separate it from every aspect of public life. Indeed, the government should encourage the expression of religious beliefs by our young people. We should not require them to check their religion at the door when they enter the school house or any other public building.

When I open the Senate each morning, we have our Chaplain deliver an opening prayer. I think it is vital that we start each day with this prayer. Yet, there is no more public building than the United States Capitol. Our children certainly should not be denied this same benefit at football games.

In the case the Supreme Court is considering, it is entirely clear that the prayer is not controlled or sponsored by the state. The prayer is conducted during an extracurricular activity, not during school hours. Also, the prayer is not led or controlled by teachers or school administrators. Rather, the students choose whether they wish to have prayer at their football game and, if so, which student will lead the prayer. The students make the decisions.

I hope that the Supreme Court will decide that the school's policy of permitting student-led, student-initiated prayer at football games does not violate the establishment clause. Student prayers at these events are a vital part of these traditions, and I sincerely hope the Court will agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

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COMMENDING SENATOR THURMOND FOR HIS REMARKS ON SCHOOL PRAYER

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I commend our distinguished colleague from South Carolina for his excellent remarks. He speaks from the heart on that subject, as he does on all of his work in the Senate. It is a privilege for me and others to learn from him constantly.

Mr. THURMOND. I thank the Senator.

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ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

DEDICATION OF WILLIE MAYS PLAZA AT PACIFIC BELL PARK

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to alert my colleagues to the March 31 dedication of Willie Mays Plaza at the new Pacific Bell Park in San Francisco. This dedication is the first in a series of events leading to opening day on April 11, when the hometown Giants begin a new era against their old rivals the Los Angeles Dodgers.

The opening of the new park is cause for great excitement among baseball fans in San Francisco, in California and throughout the country. Situated a short distance from downtown and directly on the Bay, Pacific Bell Park is both an architecturally stunning building and a state-of-the-art baseball fa-

cility. Notably, it is the first privately financed professional ballpark in the United States in 35 years. And unlike the Giants former home at Candlestick Park, PacBell Park is for baseball only.

Willie Mays Plaza is located at the main entrance to the park at Third and King Streets. In recognition of Willie Mays' number, the official address of the stadium is 24 Willie Mays Plaza. In addition, the plaza features 24 palm trees and a nine-foot bronze sculpture of the hall of famer. This handsome public space is a fitting tribute to a living legend.

It is very appropriate that the Giants have chosen to honor Willie Mays in this way. Arguably the greatest all-around player to ever play the game, if Willie Mays is not synonymous with baseball, he is certainly synonymous with the Giants. He began his career with the team in 1951 and made the move to San Francisco with the club in 1957. All told he played 20 years in a Giants uniform. Over the course of his fabled career, he hit 660 homeruns, had 3,283 hits and 1,903 runs batted in. And if this were not enough, he scored 2,062 runs, stole 338 bases, earned 12 consecutive Gold Gloves and had a career batting average of .302. A true student of the game, it is small wonder that Willie Mays remains a hero to countless fans the world over.

After a brief stint with the New York Mets at the very end of his career, Willie Mays soon returned to the Giants. Since his retirement in 1972, he has never strayed far from the game or the organization. He is currently Special Assistant to Giant's President Peter Magowan. In this capacity, he is an ambassador for the team at all manner of civic and charitable events.

On the field and off it, Willie Mays has always embodied dedication, teamwork and the pursuit of excellence. In naming this prominent part of Pacific Bell Park in his honor, the San Francisco Giants are assuring that the Say Hey Kid's example will grace this city, this team and its loyal fans for many years to come. •

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TRIBUTE TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY AND DRAKE UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL TEAMS

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wanted to take a moment to express my congratulations to and praise for the outstanding performance of both the men's and women's basketball teams at Iowa State University and the women's basketball team at Drake University this year. Drake concluded its season with a 23-7 record, while winning its fourth Missouri Valley Conference championship in the last six years and another automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament. Carla Bennet was named to the MVC All-Tournament team along with junior guard Kristin Santa. This year was Drake's seventh appearance in the tournament. The Bulldogs have advanced to the tournament four