

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

times in the last six years, with appearances in 1986, 1984, and 1982 as well so they continue a long, proud tradition.

Both Iowa State teams finished as regular season champions of the Big XII conference, then followed up that feat with convincing wins at the conference championship tournament, entitling each team to an automatic bid in the 2000 NCAA basketball tournaments. The men's championship was the university's first since 1945, when the conference was still the Big 6, while it was the first women's conference title since varsity women's basketball started at Iowa State in 1973. So these are great accomplishments.

Their achievements are exemplified by the selections of Marcus Fizer as a first-team All-American from the men's program and Stacy Frese as a second-team All-American from the women's program, but each team is much more than just its stars. Both All-Americans are complemented by strong position players throughout their respective teams, and neither team would have reached this pinnacle without the enthusiastic support of Iowa State's fans. On the weekend of the Big XII championships, held in Kansas City, a substantial portion of the city of Ames migrated south for that event, filling the arenas with loyal wearers of cardinal and gold, the team colors.

As an Iowa State graduate myself, I want to salute their accomplishments, including their fine performances in the NCAA tournaments. Both teams were active in the tournament through last weekend, the men losing in the regional finals and the women in the regional semifinals. We have a long, proud tradition of excellent basketball teams in the state of Iowa at the high school and college level, and Iowa State's 1999-2000 men's and women's basketball teams and the Drake women's team have shown themselves worthy of joining that pantheon. They're both great teams, and they did Iowa proud.●

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CELEBRATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the annual March 25th celebration of Greek Independence Day commemorates the independence of Greece from 400 years of oppression under the Ottoman Empire. Greeks have made great contributions to the world in literature, philosophy, mathematics and government. The names of Homer, Socrates, Euclid and Alexander echo through the pages of world history. It was the Greek people who started the Olympic Games saying there was more honor in peaceful competition than in wars of conquest. The greatest gift Greek people have given the world, though, is a simple yet powerful idea that was born over 2,000 years ago. It is the idea that a nation's power lies in the hands of its people. The Athenian republic was the

world's first democracy, a fact that all free nations must respect.

The bonds that join the United States and Greece are deep and long lasting. Our fore-fathers recognized the spirit and idealism of ancient Greece when drafting our Constitution. Forty-five years after our own revolution for independence, Greece freed itself with its own revolutionary struggle.

In every major international conflict of this century, Greece has been a proud ally of the United States. Honoring this day will pay special tribute to those Greek men and women who gave their lives for the common cause of freedom. Greek-Americans can especially take pride in their ancestors' sacrifice. The many Greek sons and daughters who have come to the United States have worked honorably in all areas of American life, including public service. Greek culture flourishes in American cities, adding to our country's rich diversity.

I hope Greece will resolve its differences with its Turkish neighbors over Cyprus. I hope all people in the region share in America's belief that this can be achieved through diplomacy instead of violence. Let us be mindful of the olive tree and the Olympic flame, the great symbols of Greece, and remember, too, that they are also symbols of peace.●

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THE PEACE CORPS' 40TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, at a recent event at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, the Chairman of the Library Foundation, Paul G. Kirk, Jr., and the new Director of the Peace Corps, Mark Schneider, spoke of the importance of the Peace Corps as it launched its year-long, 40th anniversary celebration. Mr. Schneider announced a new initiative to expand the role of Peace Corps volunteers in bringing information technology to the task of reducing poverty in developing countries. He also outlined a plan to expand the Peace Corps' efforts to raise global awareness about HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

It is fitting that this occasion was held at President Kennedy's library. In March 1961, President Kennedy launched the Peace Corps as a new idea to demonstrate that a new generation of Americans was moving into positions of leadership in the United States, and they intended to serve the cause of peace around the world.

The Peace Corps today continues its vital and thriving mission, with 7,400 volunteers serving in 77 countries, including recent missions in South Africa, Jordan, Mozambique and Bangladesh. In the past four decades, more than 150,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps volunteers in 134 countries, promoting peace, education, economic development and international cooperation.

Mr. President, I commend the significant current role of the Peace Corps in

involving U.S. citizens in world affairs, and making the world a better place by their efforts. I ask consent that the addresses by Mark Schneider and Paul Kirk be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows:

REMARKS OF PAUL G. KIRK, JR.

Thank you, Jim. Good evening. I know this is a special occasion for all of you, but I want you to know that it is an equally special evening for those of us associated with the Kennedy Library. Like each of you, I am also a volunteer in an important cause. And in my responsibilities as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, few privileges are as significant as having the honor to welcome home so many Peace Corps Volunteers to the nation's memorial to President Kennedy.

Senator Kennedy and Mark Schneider agreed that this Library, whose mission it is to honor John Kennedy's public life and career and to perpetuate his passion for service, is the most appropriate site at which to begin the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. And I congratulate you and I am delighted to welcome you all on behalf of the Kennedy Family, our Board of Directors and our dedicated staff.

Here in New England, as you know, we enjoy many seasons. At this time of year, we look forward to the springtime—a season when nature's energy bursts forth, when promise and hope are renewed—when opportunities seem limitless—and when a spirit of confidence and optimism make all of us, regardless of our age, feel younger than our years.

If it could be said that politics also has seasons, 40 years ago there began a season in our history that proved to be—and remains today—the height of America's political springtime—as the nation, renewed in energy, hope and idealism, responded to the patriotic call to service of the newly elected, youthful 35th President of the United States.

If, as I believe, his 1000 days were “the height of America's political springtime”, then it must be said that the planting and the subsequent flowering of the Peace Corps epitomizes all that is the very best in the lasting legacy of that season of service.

On March 1, 1961, 6 weeks after his inauguration, upon signing the Executive Order establishing the Peace Corps, President Kennedy said he was convinced that “We have in this country, an immense reservoir of men and women—anxious to sacrifice their energies and time and toil to the cause of world peace and human progress.”

He acknowledged that “life in the Peace Corps will not be easy,” but he also promised it would be “rich and satisfying.”

“(E)very young American who participates in the Peace Corps—who works in a foreign land”—he said, “will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace.”

40 years later, thanks to your service and what you continue to do, his words have a timeless quality.

Tonight, you begin your 40th Anniversary celebration at a Library and Museum that celebrates scholarship and service in John Kennedy's memory each day it opens its doors. His history and yours are preserved here for scholastic research.

We seek to perpetuate his inspiration and yours by the various activities and programs which take place here: the Profile in Courage Award, the Distinguished Foreign Visitors Programs, the forums and symposia promoting public discourse on the issues of our time, the 1st Pres. Debate of general election