

Our country owes a great debt of gratitude to General Frix for his decorated military service and accomplishments. A West Point graduate, he served our country for 34 years, earning the rank of Major General and numerous decorations including two Distinguished Service Medals, 26 Air Medals, and two Meritorious Service Medals.

Through two tours each in Vietnam and Germany, he distinguished himself as a leader, but his duty in the Middle East is most notable. As Chief of Staff and Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Central Command during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, he was instrumental in rescuing Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's siege. Commanding the Joint Task Force Kuwait, he led the enforcement of U.N. Resolution 688.

Following his military service, General Frix turned to a different kind of battle, that of decommissioning, cleaning-up, and restoring U.S. Department of Energy former nuclear weapons fabrication and materials production sites. Formerly at the Rocky Flats, Colorado site and currently at the Hanford site in my state of Washington, he manages personnel and multimillion dollar budgets in order to accomplish the clean-up and disposal of highly radioactive, toxic and hazardous materials. At the helm of the DynCorp company, he and his employees have achieved an outstanding environmental safety record.

All the while, General Frix uses his talents for the benefit of others and remains committed to serving his community as the national president of the Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation and as a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans. In addition, he has used his military management skills to retire council debts and raise almost \$10 million in endowment as a member of the Blue Mountain Council Executive Board and Senior Vice President of Finance.

General Frix willingness to help his community extends into his professional career in which he and his colleagues at DynCorp have worked side by side to construct park facilities and renovate a local cancer treatment facility. He is highly regarded by business associates as a community leader who sets an example for others to follow.●

REIT ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, the real estate investment trust, or REIT, turned 40 years old yesterday. It has been a remarkable four decades for this investment vehicle. The goal of Congress in creating REITs back in 1960 was to give the small investor an opportunity to invest in portfolios of large-scale, commercial properties. Today, anyone and everyone can buy shares of real estate operating companies that focus on particular sectors or regions of the country.

In January, the REIT Modernization Act will take effect. Adopted by Congress last year, this law will permit REITs to remain competitive in the real estate marketplace by creating subsidiaries to offer the same range of tenant services provided by its competitors. And, as the REIT marks its 40th anniversary, so too does its association, NAREIT, the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts. NAREIT's annual convention will be held here in Washington, DC next month, and we wish them well on another successful event.●

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, September 15, 2000, he presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 1374. An act to authorize the development and maintenance of a multi-agency campus project in the town of Jackson, Wyoming.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. INHOFE:

S. 3056. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain profits of businesses operated in connection with a public-private partnership with Centers of Industrial and Technical Excellence established by the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. 3057. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage; read the first time.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. 3058. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage; read the first time.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. GORTON, and Mr. SPECTER):

S. 3059. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require motor vehicle manufacturers and motor vehicle equipment manufacturers to obtain information and maintain records about potential safety defects in their foreign products that may affect the safety of vehicles and equipment in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WELLSTONE:

S. 3060. A bill to amend the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 to extend the applicability of that Act to certain former spouses of deceased Hmong veterans; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ASHCROFT:

S. 3061. A bill to require the President to negotiate an international agreement governing the recall by manufacturers of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment with safety-related defects; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. GORTON, and Mr. SPECTER):

S. 3059. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require motor vehicle manufacturers and motor vehicle equipment manufacturers to obtain information and maintain records about potential safety defects in their foreign products that may affect the safety of vehicles and equipment in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MOTOR VEHICLE AND MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT DEFECT NOTIFICATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise along with several of my colleagues to introduce legislation to reform the process used by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to investigate and order recalls for safety related defects in motor vehicles. We introduce this legislation today partly in response to the recall of 14.4 million Firestone tires and the 88 deaths and more than 250 injuries associated with those tires.

Over the past two weeks in a series of House and Senate hearings, we have begun to learn the details of how the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Ford Motor Company and Bridgestone/Firestone failed to detect and effectively respond to defective tires that were killing or causing serious harm to consumers. Based upon the still mounting evidence, it is increasingly difficult to believe that neither the companies nor NHTSA knew anything of this problem until after this summer. Annual claims reports from Firestone show an increase in claims associated with the tires subject to the recall beginning in 1996 through 1999. Ford also received numerous complaints about Firestone tires on Explorers in overseas markets. These complaints were significant enough to cause Ford to replace tires in 16 foreign countries. NHTSA was notified on at least two occasions by State Farm Insurance Company that there may be a problem with Firestone tires on Ford Explorers. Taken individually each of these incidents may not be cause for alarm. But taken collectively it is difficult to believe that no one realized this was a problem until a month ago.

I cite these facts not as evidence of guilt but as an example of the problems with the current system. NHTSA has neither the resources, the statutory authority nor the internal processes to detect and remedy safety related defects in timely fashion. The current system must be changed. When manufacturers fail to tell the truth or purposely neglect to report safety data, and people lose their lives, severe penalties must result.

It is my hope that in the remaining days of this Congress we can move from recrimination to reform. Our attention to ensuring the safety of the driving public must not be fleeting. It

unfortunately has taken the cumulative tragedy of more than 80 lives to bring our collective attention to the long overdue task of reforming the way we investigate and remedy vehicle defects.

The proposal we introduce today attempts to make some basic reforms to ensure that the current situation does not repeat itself. It would authorize the Secretary of Transportation to require manufacturers of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment to report more information such as claims data, warrant data, and lawsuits. The bill establishes criminal penalties for manufacturers that knowingly sell vehicle with a safety-related defect that causes death or serious injury. The measure will also increase the current cap on civil penalties to from \$900,000 to \$15 million. It provides the Secretary with authority to seek even greater penalties in the conduct is willful and intentional.

I know that some of my colleagues believe this legislation does not go far enough and would like to address other motor vehicles safety issues or require the reporting of other data. While I share their concerns about those important issues, I caution that we must not make the perfect the enemy of the good. I want to state openly that this proposal is no panacea to the problem, and I am perfectly open to making sensible and prudent adjustments. Next week, it is my intention to report this bill from the Senate Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address their concerns as we move through the process.

Mr. President, we have an opportunity before we adjourn to enact some basic reforms to empower the Department of Transportation to respond effectively to safety related defects in the future. I hope we will not waste this time and enact these reforms.

Mr. WELLSTONE:

S. 3060. A bill to amend the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000 to extend the applicability of that act to certain former spouses of deceased Hmong veterans; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE HMONG
VETERANS NATURALIZATION ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce a technical amendment today that, if passed, would ensure that widows and widowers of Hmong veterans who died in Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam are also covered by the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act. This critical change would allow such widows to take the United States citizenship test with a translator.

Hmong soldiers died at 10 times the rate of American soldiers in the Vietnam war. As many as 20,000 Hmong were killed serving our country. They left behind families with no means of support. They left their loved ones to fend for themselves in a hostile country.

Twenty-five years later, we cannot give widows back their loved ones, though their loved ones gave their lives for us. All we can do is honor their service in a way that is long-overdue and give them the tools to become citizens in the nation for which they heroically fought, and died.

I want to thank so many of my colleagues who worked so hard to see that the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act pass through Congress and become law. Hmong widows should have been included when this legislation was first passed and they were not. This amendment simply corrects something that should have been done long ago. I urge its swift passage.

Mr. ASHCROFT:

S. 3061. A bill to require the President to negotiate an international agreement governing the recall by manufacturers of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment with safety-related defects; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER SAFETY
INFORMATION ACT

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the International Consumer Safety Information Act. As we are all aware, there has been a tragic loss of life associated with defects in Firestone tires.

The loss of 88 lives in the United States alone from defects in Firestone tires is extremely tragic. The death toll in other countries from this U.S. product is reportedly more than 50. Each of these people had dreams that will not be realized. There is nothing we can do that will ever compensate for the loss of one life.

However, we have a responsibility to the American people and to consumers worldwide to do everything we can to create accountability and to ensure that innocent people are not put at such a high risk in the future. By quickly alerting consumers about motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment recalls around the globe, we will equip people with potentially life-saving information.

American consumers should be provided with immediate, life-saving information on motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment recalls, regardless of whether the recall originated in the United States or another country. As the chairman of the Consumer Affairs and Foreign Commerce Subcommittee, I intend to do what I can on this issue. My consumer protection plan would provide consumers—via the Internet—with more immediate information about recalls of motor vehicles or motor vehicle equipment.

U.S. drivers are just not finding out about the Firestone tire defects, but there were tire failures in Venezuela as far back as 1998, and in Saudi Arabia, 1999. It is simply unacceptable that American officials abroad did not inform the American public. My proposal would ensure that this does not happen again.

Under the legislation I am introducing today, the President would negotiate an international agreement requiring foreign countries and the United States to maintain an Internet site to inform consumers worldwide of recalls of motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment. My bill includes the following key provisions:

The international agreement would have countries include on an Internet site the names of companies that have issued recalls, the companies' contact information, the specific products that are being recalled, the countries in which the recalls are effective, and the date of the recall.

In addition, the international agreement would set up guidelines for a company that initiate a recall of motor vehicle or motor vehicle equipment to ensure that they disclose all relevant information to consumers and federal authorities in all countries it sells its products.

Finally, the bill would make the Administration accountable for disclosing information on foreign recalls by ensuring that Congress is notified and by posting the information on an Internet site for the public.

It is my hope that the Senate Commerce Committee will act quickly on this measure. At a Commerce Committee hearing this last Tuesday, I pointed out another harm that can come from a lack of adequate information about recalls.

Almost half of all Ford Explorers, which was a model that used defective Firestone tires, that are assembled in the U.S. are made at a plant in Hazelwood, Missouri. I want to visit the workers employed at this plant. The plant has been closed the past two weeks and will not reopen to assemble the popular Ford Explorer until next Monday. Most of the 2,000 workers are not reporting to work and are unsure about their future. Their overtime is nonexistence, and due to the 15,000 Explorers that will not be produced, their profit-sharing is threatened. However, they did not complain about Ford's decision to close the plant in order to get tires out to consumers as quickly as possible. In fact, they were proud that the company was willing to take such a drastic measure to serve their customers. Most importantly, they want us all to realize that what we do and what we say up here makes a difference. It makes a difference in their lives, and it affects consumer confidence in the produce these workers sweat and toil to produce.

My efforts today are intended to shine light on recalls worldwide. Consumers should know if there are recalls in other countries, and the Federal government should facilitate this transparency. The bill I am introducing today will hopefully ensure that consumers in the U.S.—and consumers worldwide—obtain updated information about recalls around the globe.