

public may reach a contrary conclusion because the name of your bank was mentioned in public documents, but I again assure you that the indictment and public statements convey nothing more than a list of the Venezuelan banks through which undercover drug funds were laundered.

Please feel free to circulate the contents of this letter as you deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

L. JEFFREY ROSS,
Special Assistant to the
Assistant Attorney General.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, Last week I offered an amendment on behalf of Senator DOMENICI and myself. It authorizes State and local transit authorities that receive Federal transit assistance to purchase transit buses through the General Services Administration. Because of GSA's limited experience with transit buses, the amendment provides for the pilot program to be managed by the Federal Transit Administration.

Currently only the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has the option to purchase buses through the General Services Administration. The pilot program would open up that option to other public transit agencies around the country that also receive Federal transit assistance. However, the pilot program is limited only to heavy-duty transit buses and intercity coaches. The initial pilot program would end on December 31, 2003.

The General Services Administration currently offers three heavy-duty transit buses and two intercity coaches. GSA selected these suppliers as a result of competitive solicitations, and the companies had to bid attractive terms and prices in order to win those 5-year contracts.

GSA intends to expand its existing sources of simply to a full multiple-award schedule with a larger variety of vehicles and choices of optional equipment. GSA indicates this process will take 12 to 18 months. Therefore, our amendment directs GSA to complete the multiple-award schedule by December 31, 2003, and authorizes state and local transit authorities that receive Federal transit assistance to purchase heavy-duty transit buses and intercity coaches off these GSA schedules. This authority would expire on December 31, 2006.

Allowing additional public transit agencies the option to purchase these buses from GSA could result in substantial options and prices would help streamline the procurement process, which could be especially valuable to some of the smaller communities. Purchasing buses through GSA will help stretch each dollar of Federal transit funding a little bit farther.

I believe it is very important to point out that this pilot program is limited only to transit buses and intercity coaches. It has no effect on companies that supply other types of buses or ve-

hicles, pharmaceuticals, or any other product that currently can be purchased through the General Services Administration. I believe transit buses are a unique situation. Purchases through the GSA should be allowed. There are only a few bus manufacturers in America today and most buses for public transit are purchased using Federal funds provided by the Federal Transit Administration.

Our bus manufacturers are not having an easy time. Our amendment will help expedite bus purchases by eliminating the cost of responding to myriad requests for proposals from public transit agencies. Our amendment will also help the public transit agencies by reducing the cost of preparing the requests for proposals and assessing the responses. I do believe this is a meritorious amendment. It is one I would very much like to see adopted as part of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it. The amendment has the support of the Federal Transit Administration, bus manufacturers, and public transit agencies across the Nation.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter from the American Public Transportation Association be printed in the RECORD.

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

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2001.

Hon. JEFF BINGAMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources, Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding a provision the Senate is expected to take up as part of the defense appropriations bill that would allow recipients of funds under the federal transit program to purchase heavy-duty and intercity buses from the General Services Administration schedule of contracts.

The Business Member Board of Governors of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) considered a similar provision in a meeting on Sunday, September 30, 2001. They voted in support of the measure.

Further, on December 7, 2001, APTA's Legislative Committee considered this new provision and unanimously agreed to support it. While APTA's governing body has not had an opportunity formally to consider the provision, our public transit members are supportive of measures that would simplify and standardize the federal procurement process, as this provision would do. We are particularly pleased to note that under the provision GSA, with assistance from the Federal Transit Administration, would be required to establish and publish a multiple award schedule for heavy-duty buses, which means that any heavy-duty or intercity bus manufacturer would be provided an opportunity to participate in the program.

Please have your staff contact Daniel Duff, APTA's Chief Counsel & Vice President, Government Affairs, should you have any questions about this matter. He may be reached at (202) 496-4860 or internet e-mail dduff@apta.com.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM W. MILLAR,
President.

D.C. FAMILY COURT REFORM

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to note for the record a few important points. As you may know, the fiscal year 2002 Appropriations Act for the District of Columbia, which is on its way to the President's desk as we speak, included a total of \$24 million dollars for the purpose of funding the reforms provided for under the Family Court Reform Act of 2001. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the DC Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator DEWINE and I felt very strongly that these funds were a necessary prerequisite for the kind of change we envisioned. This money was provided to the Courts with the expectation that it would be used to affect this reform in the most immediate and effective way possible. Having worked with the Courts for the better part of this past year, we are confident that they will work diligently towards implementing a unified family court, staffed with highly trained and experienced judges, attorneys and court personnel. We expect that they will do their best to ensure that this family court is structured in such a way as to reflect its founding principle, "One family, One Judge", a critical component in an effective child welfare system. And finally, we hope that the chief judge, the Child and Family Services Agency and others will go beyond the letter of the law and embrace its spirit, that the safety and well being of our children must remain our paramount concern.

With that said, I would like to make clear our intent in including language which restricts the total distribution of the \$24 million until the family court reform plan is received and reviewed by Congress. It should be noted that one hundred percent of the DC Superior Court's operating budget is paid for with Federal funds. Therefore, Congress has a unique obligation to ensure that the day-to-day operations of this court reflect the best practices in each and every area of law under its jurisdiction. The Family Court Reform Act of 2001 lays out a broad set of guidelines for the reform of the family court in the District. Under the provisions of the DC Appropriations bill, within 90 days of the date of its enactment, the Courts are to submit to Congress a plan for the immediate transition to a unified family court system. Within 30 days of receipt of this report, the General Accounting Office is to provide Congress with an independent review of this plan. Finally, after a 30 day review period in Congress, the funds earmarked for family court reform are to be distributed to the Court and to the Mayor to implement these reforms.

Our intent in arranging the distribution of funds in this way was to ensure that the money added to the Court's budget for the purpose of family court reform would remain available to carry out the reform plan. In the short time since the Congress passed the DC Appropriations conference report, modification to the authorization bill have

expedited the time in which the Court's are required to hire magistrate judges and their support personnel. The DC Courts have the ability to use funds from their general operating budget to hire magistrates, their staff, or any other activity, before the family court reform funds are available. We recognize that certain requirements of the family Court Reform Act of 2001 require immediate action and we encourage the Court to take the necessary steps to provide for a seamless transition.

If the constraints on family court reform funds contained in the DC Appropriations bill prove to be unfeasible, I am committed to revisiting those constraints when Congress reconvenes in January. The Senate Appropriations Committee does not intend to hinder the implementation of the Family Court Reform Act in any way. We hope that we can work with our colleagues in the House to clarify this issue if necessary.

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOVER AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, on December 20, 1941, the 112th Observation Squadron of the Ohio National Guard arrived in Dover, DE, to begin conducting anti-submarine patrols. It was the first military unit to serve at what is now known as the Dover Air Force Base.

The history of the Base actually goes back 2 years further, to 1939, when in response to the Nazi invasion of Poland, the Civilian Aviation Administration, CAA, offered State and local governments on both coasts financial help to build municipal airports. The CAA offered to build one airfield in each of Delaware's three counties; the State did not pursue the offer, but New Castle and Sussex Counties accepted. Kent County passed the issue to the city of Dover, our State capital, and the Dover leaders agreed and purchased the land for a new airfield, in what has been hailed many times since as "the best investment the city ever made."

In addition to the anti-submarine mission during World War II, Dover's airfield was used, once the Corps of Engineers had done some of its magic, to train fighter squadrons and then, in 1944, as the site for classified air-launched rocket tests, experiments that led to the use of air-to-surface rockets in both the European and the Pacific Theaters.

After the war, the airfield was placed on caretaker status, and although it remained inactive for the rest of the 1940s, the name was officially changed to Dover Air Force Base in January 13, 1948. Control of the Base was transferred to the Ninth Air Force in February 1949. In February 1951, the Dover Air Force Base was reactivated and put under the jurisdiction of the Air Defense Command, ADC, with different fighter squadrons using the airfield over the course of the next 7 years.

The foundation for a permanent mission was laid when, recognizing Dover's strategic location, the Military Air Transport Service, MATS, assumed control and began, with an appropriation from Congress, to transform the Base into the East Coast embarkation point and foreign clearing base. Four units of the Atlantic Division were organized at Dover: the 1607th Air Base Group, the 1607th Air Base Squadron, the 1607th Maintenance and Supply Squadron, and the 1607th Medical Group. In November 1953, the first two transport squadrons were assigned, forming the core of the 1607th Air Transport Wing, and in December of that year, the Secretary of the Air Force designated the Dover Air Force Base as a permanent military installation.

In 1955, the Aerial Port Mortuary responsibilities were transferred to Dover, and many Americans have become familiar with the Base for its prominence and exceptional service in fulfilling that duty. To offer an incomplete list, the Port Mortuary has received the remains of casualties of the war in Vietnam, a number of plane and helicopter crashes involving military personnel, the mass suicide in Guyana, the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, the *Challenger* explosion, the USS *Stark*, Pan Am 103, the USS *Iowa*, the Khoobar Towers bombing, the 1998 bombing in Kenya, and most recently, victims of the September 11 attack on the Pentagon.

From the mid-1950s to the mid-Sixties, to offer another incomplete list, Dover Air Force Base participated in Project Ice Cube to construct a Defense Early Warning Network in Northern Canada; the airlift to help combat a polio outbreak in Argentina; Operation Good Hope to Jordan; the Amigo Airlift in response to a devastating earthquake in Chile; an airlift of relief supplies to Honduras after Hurricane Hattie; the airlift of United Nations peacekeepers to the Belgian Congo; the Cuban Missile Crisis; the relief airlift following the Great Alaskan Earthquake; and the delivery of supplies to Guadeloupe Island after Hurricane Cleo, as well as supporting the deepening involvement in Vietnam.

In January 1966, a reorganization led to the designation of the Military Airlift Command and the activation of the 436th Military Airlift Wing to assume command of the Base. The 436th, by the way, has its own proud history, going back to the famed 436th Troop Carrier Group, TCG, which participated in just about every major European campaign of World War II, from Normandy to Operation Market Garden to Bastogne to Operation Varsity.

In 1968, the 912th Military Airlift Group, Associate, along with the 326th Military Airlift, the 912th Support, and the 912th Material Squadrons, were activated at Dover, giving the Base a total of four active and one reserve military airlift squadrons. In 1973, the 512th Military Airlift Wing, A, which is

now the 512th Airlift Wing, A, was activated as a replacement to the 912th and its subordinates; the 512th AW remains a key part of Dover's mission. From 1971 to 1973, the transition was undertaken to make Dover home to the first all C-5 equipped wing in the Air Force.

During the Vietnam war, Dover aircrews participated in, among others, Operation Blue Light in January 1966 and Operation Eagle Thrust in 1967, an incredibly ambitious military airlift into a combat zone for which Dover personnel received their first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Among other most notable missions in which Dover crews have participated are Operation Nickel Grass, during which Dover's C-5s flew 71 missions, more than 2,000 hours, delivering more than 5,000 tons of cargo. That operation is considered by many to have been the first real test of the C-5 aircraft. Dover crews also successfully dropped and test-fired a Minuteman I ICBM in 1974, and delivered a 40-ton superconducting magnet to Moscow in 1977 as part of a joint energy research program. The mission to Moscow earned the crew the Mackay Trophy for the most meritorious flight of the year. Missions to Zaire and, in the cause of joint verification, another to the Soviet Union also earned Mackay Trophies for Dover captains and crews.

Dover crews helped evacuate Americans from Iran in 1978, and supported the Marine operation in Lebanon in 1983-84. Dover's C-5s flew 27 missions in the invasion on Grenada also in 1983, and assisted with the clean-up after the *Valdez* oil spill in 1989. Eighteen missions were flown by Dover crews in Operation Just Cause in Panama, and in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Persian Gulf War, Dover's C-5s logged more than 30,000 flying hours. Since then, Dover crews have flown in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia; in Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Operations Desert Thunder and Desert Fox in 1998; and in Operation Allied Force against the military structure of Slobodan Milosevic.

Among recent humanitarian missions have been the airlift to Central America following Hurricane Mitch; Joint Task Force Shining Hope to aid Kosovar refugees; airlifts to Turkey following the earthquakes of 1999; the 436 AW also responded to the earthquake that same year in Taiwan; and Operation Atlas Response in Mozambique after the devastating flooding there last year.

And, of course, there is Operation Enduring Freedom, our common cause in which our military men and women bear so much of the burden, the risk and the sacrifice. Our prayers and thanks are with them every day, including the 200 men and women from the 512 Air Reserve Wing who have been activated. I would also note that the 436th Airlift Wing received its 13th Air Force Outstanding Unity Award in October.