

OLYMPIA SNOWE and Senator JEFF BINGAMAN to finish the job we started last year and fulfill our country's commitment. Honoring our commitment to active duty personnel, military retirees, and veterans is of special importance to me for a number of reasons. My oldest son, Brooks, currently serves in the Army and tells me firsthand how broken promises impact the morale of active duty personnel and their families.

Finally, an issue that needs to be addressed this year is concurrent receipt. I find it indefensible that our government forces men and women who fought for our country and are disabled as a result of it to choose between retirement pay and disability compensation. This nickel-and-diming of our country's heroes must stop, and I recently joined Senator HARRY REID in introducing the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2001, S. 170. I am hopeful that we will be able to continue on the progress made last year on Concurrent Receipt and finally make this long-overdue correction for 437,000 disabled veterans nationwide.

Veterans are our country's heroes, and their selfless actions will inspire generations of Americans yet to come. Our country must honor its commitments to veterans, not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's the smart thing to do. I consider myself fortunate to live in our democracy, and I am filled with a sense of patriotism each day as I travel to work and see the United States Capitol come into view. In this city that is filled with monuments to the heroism of our Founding Fathers and the men and women who have served to protect our freedoms, I pledge that I will continue to fight to make veterans issues a priority in Congress.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S NEW JERSEY VISIT

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, yesterday, I joined with my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Senator TORICELLI, in welcoming the President of the United States to our State of New Jersey.

I was very pleased that the President decided to visit our State, and out of respect for him I decided to go to New Jersey to welcome him personally. In my view, it is critical that members of both parties work together in a positive and constructive way to address our Nation's problems. Although the President and I disagree on a number of issues, I sincerely want to cooperate with him wherever possible to help the people of New Jersey and all Americans, and I appreciated the chance to spend some time with him.

Unfortunately, because I was in New Jersey with the President, I missed a vote on the motion to table the Wyden amendment, No. 78. This amendment would have made nondischargeable certain debts arising from the exchange of electric energy in response to the re-

cent crisis in California. If I had been present, I would have voted "aye" on the motion to table. Like Senator FEINSTEIN, I am concerned that by interjecting ourselves into this issue and giving a priority to certain creditors, we could trigger a rush to bankruptcy court that could force California utilities into bankruptcy.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES TAX CREDIT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, last week I met with South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General Phil Killey and a group of about 30 men and women from the South Dakota Guard and Reserves. Almost every community in our state benefits from the work of these Guardsmen and Reservists. For example, Guard units helped clean up the debris from last August's windstorm that hit Spearfish and Mitchell. Guard units in Aberdeen and Brookings spearheaded city-wide clean up efforts, and soldiers in Brookings even sponsored underprivileged children during the holiday season. The Guard also was instrumental in fighting the Jasper fire in the Black Hills last summer. The list goes on. From Aberdeen to Yankton, the Guard and Reserves are active members of the South Dakota community.

In addition to the support the Guard and Reserves give to South Dakota, they have also supported overseas operations including those in Central America, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. The South Dakota Air Guard is currently preparing for its mission later this year, where it will patrol the "No-Fly Zone" in Iraq.

Most South Dakotans know at least one of the 4,500 current members of the South Dakota Guard and Reserves or the thousands of former Guardsmen and Reservists. Sometimes, the connection is even more direct. Before joining the Army, my oldest son was a member of the South Dakota Army Guard in Yankton.

General Killey reported that South Dakota ranks third in the nation in the readiness of its Guard and Reserve units. South Dakota's units are also tops in the nation in the quality of its new recruits. I commend the South Dakota Guard and Reserves for their continued excellence. National rankings only confirm the quality that has come to be expected of the Guard and Reserve of a great state.

However, recruiting and keeping the best of the best in the South Dakota National Guard and Reserves is becoming more of a challenge as our military's operations tempo has remained high while the number of active duty military forces has decreased. This tempo places significant pressure on members of the reserve component and those who employ them as they experience greater training and participation demands. That is why I am joining Senator MIKE DEWINE in introducing targeted tax relief for Guardsmen, Reservists, and those who employ them.

The legislation, called the Reserve Component Tax Assistance Act, will allow Guardsmen and Reservists to claim deductions for travel, meals, and lodging when they travel away from home and remain overnight to attend National Guard and Reserve meetings. A significant portion of the Guard and Reserve in South Dakota must travel at least 40 miles for training and meetings.

The second part of this legislation gives their employers a tax credit when the Reservists and Guardsmen are called up for a contingency operation. Often, these men and women will be gone months in support of overseas military efforts, leaving employers in a difficult position. This year the Air Guard will be deployed to Iraq, and members of the Army National Guard will be deployed to Bosnia next year. Our bipartisan legislation helps to minimize the economic impact by giving a maximum tax credit per employee of \$2000. Each employer would be eligible for a maximum credit of \$7500. This credit will help an estimated 1,100 to 1,300 businesses in our state who employ Guardsmen and Reservists.

Our legislation provides much needed tax relief to Guardsmen and Reservists, and the employers who support them, and I will continue to do all I can to support our National Guard and Reserves.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL GIRL SCOUT WEEK

• Mrs. CARNAHAN. Mr. President, this week marks the 89th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts of America. What began with a single troop of 12 girls in 1912 has grown into a 3.6 million member organization. Missouri alone has nearly 100,000 members. Over the last 89 years Girl Scouts of America has helped to instill in countless girls strong values, a social conscience, and the conviction of their own potential and self-worth.

Earlier this week, I cosponsored a resolution to designate this week as National Girl Scout Week. I thank my colleagues for unanimously passing that resolution. The Girl Scouts of America has become a national institution. The organization has held a Congressional charter for more than 50 years, and spread to nearly every city in the nation. Girl Scouts learn to be, as the Girl Scout Law says, "considerate, caring, courageous and strong." They develop a strong sense of community responsibility along with a sense of self-worth. These girls serve as role models in their communities and become tomorrow's leaders.

Community service is a bedrock principal of the Girl Scouts. Every year, each troop conducts a service project to assist their community. The Girl Scout Council of Greater St. Louis is about to start their annual April Showers project. Every year they collect and

distribute personal care items like shampoo, toothbrushes, and diapers to families in need throughout the area. Last year they collected nearly one million items, helping countless families.

On the other side of Missouri, Kara Dorsey, a member of Troop 706 in Warrensburg, recently won her Girl Scout Gold Award for creating a library at the new Warrensburg Veteran's Home. Kara organized two fundraising events then purchased books, tapes and magazine subscriptions with the proceeds. Because of Kara's work, the veterans in Warrensburg have a recreational and educational outlet they might not have had otherwise.

Girl Scouts may be most famous for Thin Mints, Samoas and Tagalongs, but those cookies are more than delicious snacks. Cookie sales teach the scouts about money management, selling skills, and give the girls a chance to give back to their community. Junior Girl Scout Troop 59, in Odessa, Missouri, voted to give a percentage of the money it earned in January to the House of Hope, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. When someone asked Rachel Kopp, a member of the troop, why they had donated the money, she said, "It was the Girl Scout thing to do." Indeed it is. That is what makes the Girl Scouts so unique. Girl Scouts provide an environment where girls are challenged and guided to become capable, self-reliant, ethical women who make a difference.

On this, their anniversary, I want to thank the Girl Scouts of America for enriching so many young lives, and once again thank my colleges for unanimously calling for the recognition of National Girl Scout Week.●

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF THE REV. AND MRS. BENJAMIN HOOKS

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, every day in towns and cities across America, moms and dads, uncles and cousins, gather, in time-honored tradition, to celebrate the milestones of their lives—the births, baptisms, and anniversaries that bind them together and make them one.

Perhaps the most cherished of these is the celebration of marriage because it is marriage, after all, that creates the first and most essential cell of human society—the family.

If they are blessed, Mr. President, these anniversary celebrations of marriage include larger circles of friends and colleagues who recognize not only the value of a special couple's commitment to each other, but also the value of that commitment to all of us as the larger family of God.

On March 24, 2001, in Memphis, Tennessee, Mr. President, such a gathering will occur, and it is in honor of that occasion that I rise today to pay special tribute to a special couple, the Rev. Benjamin Hooks and his bride, Frances, who will celebrate 50 years as husband and wife.

Mr. President, this son of Memphis, is a man whose accomplishments as a pioneer of the civil rights movement, a courageous leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and, more recently, as Director of the NAACP are well-known to most Americans. Less known, perhaps, is his work as a public defender, the first African American judge in Tennessee elected since Reconstruction, an outspoken critic of media portrayals of minority stereotypes, and pastor of the Greater Middle Baptist Church in Memphis where I have been honored to worship, and where both Benjamin and Frances have tirelessly dedicated themselves to bringing the goodwill of the family to all society.

But as important as their public work is and has been, it is the private union of these two remarkable human beings that we honor today—their affection and devotion, their deep and lasting commitment and, most of all, the love that encompasses not only each other but all who know them.

Mr. President, it is my honor and privilege to join with their daughter, Patricia, their family, and all their many friends, in congratulating the Rev. and Mrs. Benjamin Hooks on 50 years of marriage. May the good Lord continue to bless them all the days of their lives.●

IN MEMORY OF GINA PENNESTRI

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is with a combination of great sadness and great joy that I ask the Senate to pause briefly so that I may share a little of the remarkable life of my dear friend and confidante Gina Pennestri.

I first met Gina when she was working for my hero and former boss, Congressman John Burton. When John announced his decision to leave the House in 1982, I decided to run for his seat. I can say without hesitation that without Gina I never would have won my first election to Congress. In fact, it is almost certain that without Gina I would not be here today as a U.S. Senator. After that first election she came to work for me and headed my district office until her retirement in 1989. For these and all her other gifts, I will be forever in her debt.

Gina was born on September 30, 1923 in Washington, DC. In retrospect, this makes perfect sense. She always seemed to have been born into politics. She attended George Washington University and became active locally advocating for voting rights for District residents. She began her long career in public service during World War II conducting employee relations for civilian employees stationed overseas. After the War she assisted with the Berlin Airlift working to assure that medical, food and other supplies got to those who needed them.

Gina moved to San Francisco in 1951, where she began at once to raise a family and more than one ruckus. From her first days in the City until her very

last, Gina was known for her community spirit and activism. Over the years she worked to protect open space, to achieve civil rights, to end the war in Vietnam and so much more. Gina could be tough. She believed deeply in the inherent worth of all people, and worked especially hard to protect those less fortunate. She was that all-to-rare person whose depth of compassion was matched by an astute political mind. When it came to fighting for what was right, she let nothing and no one stand in the way. Her example inspires me to this day.

A thorn in the side to a few, she was deeply beloved by countless more. And to those who knew her best she was more than just an ally or friend, she was a member of the family. When Gina let you into her life you were there for keeps. Her loyalty was legendary, and her wisdom helped me navigate many difficulties, both in my professional and private life. My family and I will miss her tremendously. Our thoughts and prayers are with her son Marc, his wife Nancy and their children Laura and Daniel, to all of whom Gina was deeply devoted.

So today, I stand before you full of tremendous sorrow over the loss of a true friend and partner. But through the process of remembering Gina and her time among us, I am also filled with tremendous joy—joy that I was so fortunate to have met her and shared in her generous gifts and spirit. It comforts me to know that although she is gone, these will most assuredly live on in the many lives she touched.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:32 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 327. An act to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United State Code, for the purpose of facilitating compliance by small businesses with certain Federal paperwork requirements and to establish a task force to examine the feasibility of streamlining paperwork requirements applicable to small businesses.

H.R. 364. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at