

serving with the Border Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he worked in private practice. I know he has dreamed of being a Federal judge. His dream has now come true. I might say, as an example of the hard-working industry of Sam Haddon, he is the first member of his family to go off to college and he now will become, when he is sworn in, a U.S. Federal judge. We are all extremely proud of Sam Haddon.

Before serving as U.S. Magistrate in Great Falls, MT, Richard Cebull served as a Billings attorney for close to 30 years. He was born and raised in our State and has earned the respect of everyone in our State who has had the good fortune and privilege of meeting him, engaging with him as a magistrate or in a nonprofessional capacity. He and Sam Haddon are two people who are just perfect representatives of the quality of the people in our State of Montana.

It is a great honor and with great pride I join in thanking them for wanting to serve, and I thank the Senate for confirming both of them so we in Montana now have all our judgeships filled. We have three wonderful U.S. district court judges. We thank all in the Senate who have made this happen.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 2299, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2299) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murray/Shelby amendment No. 1025, in the nature of a substitute.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to present to the Senate the Transportation appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002.

This bill was reported unanimously by both the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation as well as the full Appropriations Committee. This bill has been carefully crafted with the regular input of Senator SHELBY and his staff.

The tradition of this subcommittee has always been one of bipartisanship. So long as I have the privilege of chairing this subcommittee, I intend to continue that tradition.

The bill as approved by the Appropriations Committee totals \$60.1 billion in total budgetary resources. That includes obligations released from the highway and airway trust funds as well

as appropriations from the general fund. This funding level is higher than the level requested by the President. There are four reasons why this bill exceeds the President's request.

First, the administration's budget—rather than requesting appropriated dollars for railroad safety and hazardous materials safety—asks us to impose new user fees on the transportation industry.

Some opponents of this approach have called these proposals "George W. Bush's new taxes." The committee bill rejects these new user fees and provides the funds necessary for these critical safety functions.

Second, the bill increases funding for highways above the level requested by the President.

Under the administration's budget, the President launches two new initiatives at the expense of highway construction dollars to the States. They are the New Freedom Initiative for the disabled and an investment in new truck safety inspection stations at the United States-Mexico border.

The bill before you fully funds these two new initiatives. In fact, the bill adds \$15 million to the level requested by the administration for border truck safety activities.

However, in order to ensure that funding for these initiatives is not provided at the expense of highway construction funds in all 50 States, the bill increases funding for highways to a level that holds all States harmless.

Under the committee bill, every State will receive more highway construction funding than they would receive either under the President's budget or under the levels assumed in TEA-21.

Third, the bill includes a number of small but important safety initiatives that were not included in the President's budget.

Within the Federal Aviation Administration, the bill includes funding to hire an additional 221 safety inspectors.

Following the ValuJet crash in May 1996, the Transportation subcommittee has been increasing the inspection work force every year in order to get to the level of 3,300 inspectors. That was the minimum level identified as necessary by the panel of experts that was convened following that crash. It was also the level identified by the National Civil Aviation Review Commission, which was chaired by now-Secretary Norm Mineta.

While the funds for these additional inspectors were not included in the President's budget this year, the bill as approved by the committee does provide them.

In the area of highway safety, the bill includes funds that were not requested to boost seat belt use, especially among at-risk populations. The Administration has articulated a very aggressive goal to increase seat belt use. Unfortunately, when our subcommittee reviewed the budget, we found no additional resources were requested to match the rhetoric.

Today, it is a tragic fact that African-American children, ages 5 to 12, face almost three times the risk of dying in a car crash than white children.

The bill before us includes additional, unrequested funds to tackle that problem. The committee has also provided funding above the President's request in the area of pipeline safety. I became involved in this issue after a tragic liquid pipeline accident that claimed three young lives in Beltingham, WA.

The bill before us provides funding that is \$11 million more than the level provided last year. Increased funding will be available to boost staffing for the Community Right to Know Initiative and other critical safety measures.

I am proud that this bill provides record funding to make pipelines safer. It is the right thing to do.

Finally, the funding in the bill is higher than the administration's request due to my insistence that we address chronic staffing, training, and equipment shortfalls at the Coast Guard's search and rescue stations.

The bill provides the Coast Guard's operating budget with \$45 million more than the administration's request in order to address these search and rescue deficiencies and fund the mandatory pay and benefit costs for our Coast Guard service members.

Before I close, I would like to turn to the issue of Mexican trucks, which is explained in detail on page 85 of the committee report. Here, our challenge has been to make sure that commerce can move between our two borders while—at the same time—ensuring the safety of all who use our highways.

President Bush requested \$88 million to improve the truck safety inspection capacity at the United States-Mexico border. Unfortunately, the Transportation bill as passed by the House of Representatives does not include even one penny for that request.

The bill before you includes \$103 million—\$15 million more than the level requested by the President—for these border truck safety activities.

The House bill also includes a provision that prohibits the DOT from granting any Mexican trucking firm an operating certificate to begin the cross-border trucking activity that was anticipated by NAFTA.

I believe we have found a good compromise that will promote free trade and ensure safety on our roads. We crafted a provision based on the serious safety risks cited by the inspector general, the General Accounting Office, and several state law enforcement authorities.

Our provision, which is in this bill, is designed to ensure that a meaningful safety monitoring and enforcement regime is in place before Mexican trucks are allowed to travel anywhere in the United States.

The provision establishes several enhanced truck safety requirements that are intended to ensure that this new

cross-border truck activity does not pose a safety risk.

This provision was adopted unanimously by both the Transportation Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee.

My door is always open to Secretary Mineta and the White House, and I will of course listen to their concerns. But I believe that my provision—as it currently stands—will allow our mutual goals of free trade and safe highways to proceed side by side.

This provision will substantially raise the safety standards that will have to be in place before cross-border trucking can begin. I believe that this is a far better approach than the one taken by the House bill—which has now drawn a veto threat by the administration.

I want to thank Senator SHELBY for all his input into this bill.

I also want to thank Senator BYRD and Senator STEVENS for granting our subcommittee an allocation that made it possible to fund the important safety initiatives in this bill.

We could not have done it without their help.

I thank the Chair, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I rise in support of the fiscal year 2002 Transportation appropriations bill put before the Senate today by Senator MURRAY. I do support the package reported unanimously from the Committee on Appropriations and just described by the Senator from Washington in pretty good detail.

There is the first year for the Senator from Washington as chairperson of the Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee. I believe she has accounted for herself well on this bill. We have worked together. She has put a lot into it, and I believe this is basically a balanced bill.

I believe that every Member can look at this bill and find a great deal that they can agree with. But, I also think it is safe to say that if you look hard enough, just about everyone can find something they would probably disagree with.

Clearly, that is the case with the Mexican truck issue. I believe that everyone in this body is supportive of ensuring the safety of trucks on our highways. I believe that many in this body consider the approach to Mexican trucks adopted on the House floor as being heavy-handed, and contrary to the goal of improving the safety of trucks at our borders, within the commercial zone, and ultimately, beyond the commercial zone on the balance of our Nation's highways.

Senator MURRAY has crafted a provision, section 343, that takes a different approach. It provides for Mexican truck access to our highways beyond the commercial zone once the Department has an adequate inspection regime in place and can assure that those carriers and trucks meet articulated safety and insurance standards.

The approach of the Senator from Washington moves the debate on this issue forward and allows a resolution of this issue based on safety standards rather than prohibiting any action by the Department to manage the truck safety issues we face at our southern border under NAFTA.

For my colleagues who would support the House language, some of whom may offer a similar provision during consideration of this bill, I would point out that provision does little, if anything, to promote truck safety on our highways. It may keep some unsafe trucks from gaining entry to our country, but it doesn't create a framework or any incentive to improve the safety of Mexican trucks. I have to tell you, that I am probably less troubled by an outright prohibition than is the Senator from Washington. But, I am willing to pursue this issue with her through the Senate and to address my colleagues' concerns during conference to ensure that traffic beyond the commercial zone is safe.

To do that, it is incumbent on us to provide the necessary resources to begin adequately inspecting motor carriers at the border. I am pleased that the bill before us provides a total of \$103.2 million to enhance safety at the border—\$15 million more than the President requested. Specifically, the bill includes \$13.9 million to hire an additional 80 safety inspectors, \$18 million for enhanced Motor Carrier Safety Grants to border states, and \$71.3 million for motor carrier safety inspection facilities along the United States-Mexican border.

That is a quantum leap forward in terms of ensuring safe transportation of goods across the border for the benefit of American consumers. While we must provide the tools to the Department, we must also provide the Department with the flexibility to put forth a policy for operations beyond the commercial zones, so long as the policy would not undermine the safety of American families on our highways.

The Murray language does just that. It allows the Department to process applications of Mexican-based motor carriers after the Department remedies deficiencies highlighted by the Department of Transportation Inspector General and after Mexican-domiciled carriers meet the strict safety requirements that this bill demands.

Chairman BYRD and Senator STEVENS have provided the Transportation Subcommittee with a generous allocation, and that has allowed this bill to fund the programs and the initiatives that the Senator from Washington has just described. I would like to take a few minutes to highlight a couple of those items.

For the Coast Guard, this bill provides \$45 million more than the President's request for operating expenses—and that is in addition to the \$92 million that was just agreed to in the supplemental conference report for fiscal year 2001. While the Coast Guard isn't

overfunded, it is not underfunded. The resources are in this bill to continue and grow lifesaving, fisheries enforcement, drug interdiction, and migrant interdiction activities in fiscal year 2002.

I believe we need to continue vigorous oversight to make sure that these dollars get to the Coast Guard districts and to the men and women who volunteer to put their lives at risk to save lives, and to meet the Coast Guard's other missions. I continue to be concerned about the growth in overhead at the headquarters. The increasing costs there are troubling.

I would also like to point out the bill provides the \$325.2 million for the first year of construction funding for the Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater Project. This funding represents the first significant installment of a 20-year, \$10 billion Coast Guard program to put in place a systems integrator to design, develop, and construct new surface ships, aircraft, sensors, and communications equipment—or modernize legacy assets—used to conduct operations 50 miles offshore and beyond.

I have serious reservations about the long-term funding prospects of this procurement, the inherent schedule and cost risks of the acquisition strategy, and with Coast Guard's ability to manage a contract of this magnitude and complexity. While I am merely raising these concerns now, I intend to discuss them in greater detail later during the consideration of this bill in this Senate Chamber.

The FAA is generously funded in this bill. The funding levels match the AIR 21 levels for the FAA's two capital accounts, and the funding for FAA operations exceeds the President's budget request. While the cost efficiencies from the controller agreement have yet to show up in the operations account, and there continue to be significant slippages and cost escalations in several of the FAA procurement programs that are critical to modernization of the National Airspace System, the bill before the Senate provides badly needed funding to continue the operations and to support an aggressive modernization program.

Accordingly, the committee-reported bill also more than meets the TEA-21 highway and transit funding levels and increases the obligation limitation for highways and provides additional resources for transit new start systems. This funding commitment by the committee bill recognizes the priorities on these accounts reflected in the requests from Members of the Senate. I commend the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, for her attention to the interests of the Department and the Senate in constructing the package before the Senate today.

While the bill commits a fair amount of funding for the Appalachian Development Highway System, I would note that a great deal more funding is required to complete the commitment that has been made to this system. The

ADH system is far less complete than the National Highway System and many years at these funding levels will be required to improve some of the most deficient and dangerous segments of the rural highway system in all of America.

The bill provides \$521 million for Amtrak and authorizes the railroad to immediately use all of these funds in one fiscal year. For the past several years, the bill has limited Amtrak to using 40 percent of its funding in the first year so the balance would be available for the next. Keep in mind that this money is appropriated for capital activities and investments, so the provision and anticipation that it would all spend out is unusual in and by itself. My sense is that this extraordinary action is at best a short-term solution.

Amtrak, as a lot of you know, is engaging in short-term borrowing to cover operational and debt service costs and Amtrak's cash shortfall is growing to unsustainable levels. Allowing the cash-starved Amtrak to spend its entire appropriation for fiscal year 2002 will allow, however, Amtrak to squeak through to the Spring of 2002, when this failed experiment, I believe, will again be out of money.

I hope that we can move this legislation quickly through the Senate and through the conference. During Senate consideration of the Transportation appropriations bill, I will cover some of these issues in more detail, as will Senator MURRAY. But I look forward to working with the Senator from Washington, the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations, and with interested Members to consider and pass this legislation.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to applaud the committee for including the \$5 million grant for the Eighth Paralympiad for the Disabled cited in this bill. This funding is for the 2002 Paralympic Games not the 2002 Olympic Games. It is important to remember that while the Paralympics are being held in conjunction with the Olympics in Salt Lake City, all the funding for the Paralympic Games has been very carefully and very clearly separated from that for the Olympics. This funding will be spent only for Paralympic costs and includes both Federal and private sources of funding.

This funding supports the disabled athletes who compete at Olympic levels. These elite disabled athletes deliver amazing performances that are wonderful to behold. For example, they ski with one leg or they ski blind. We ask them to perform on Olympic courses, at Olympic levels, and finish in times within Olympic ranges.

The Paralympics and Special Olympics are events our country traditionally recognizes as important priorities. That is, to encourage the development of sports among special populations. Moreover, it has been an advantage to have the Olympic Committee, for the first time, host the Paralympic Games. This ensures that the Paralympic ath-

letes are recognized as Olympic level competitors and ensures they are treated as Olympians. It also allows for synergy in developing operational plans thus making the Paralympics far more efficient.

Note that the Paralympic's association with the Olympic Committee has brought yet another benefit. The Federal funding for these Paralympic games is far less than ever before. For the benefit of my colleagues, let me put this issue in perspective. These games will cost approximately \$80 million. The Atlanta Paralympics were also about \$80 million. But there the comparison ends. In Atlanta, \$32 million were funded by the Federal Government. In the Salt Lake Paralympics, Federal funding will only be \$10 million.

Why are the Salt Lake City Paralympics requesting far less Federal funding than the Atlanta Paralympics? The Salt Lake Olympic Committee is paying \$40 million of the costs and raising another \$30 million from private sources. The Atlanta Olympic Committee paid \$15 million and raised \$33 million for the Paralympics. Because the Salt Lake Olympic Committee is contributing more to the Paralympics, the amount of Federal funding has been reduced from \$32 million for the Atlanta games to \$10 million for the Salt Lake games. And, this bill only asks for \$5 million for transportation while the Atlanta transportation cost to the Federal Government was \$5.6 million.

This is a wise use of Federal funds. The \$5 million requested for the Paralympics are well justified. Additionally, these costs are most reasonable when compared to the Atlanta games and given the careful financial management on the part of the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Committee.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senator from Washington.

AMENDMENT NO. 1029 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1025

Mrs. MURRAY. I send a technical amendment to the desk that has been approved by both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY], for herself and Mr. SHELBY, proposes an amendment numbered 1029.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 20, line 16, strike the numeral and all that follows through the word "Code" on page 18 and insert in lieu thereof the following: "\$3,348,128 shall be set aside for the program authorized under section 1101(a)(11) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, as amended and section 162 of title 23, United States Code;"

On page 33, line 12, strike the word "together" and all that follows through the semi-colon on line 14.

On page 78, strike line 20 through 24.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1029.

The amendment (No. 1029) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1030 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1029

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I send another amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY], for herself and Mr. SHELBY, proposes an amendment numbered 1030.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To enhance the inspection requirements for Mexican motor carriers seeking to operate in the United States and to require them to display decals)

On page 73, strike lines 19 through 24 and insert the following:

"(E) requires—

"(i) inspections of all commercial vehicles of Mexican motor carriers authorized, or seeking authority, to operate beyond United States municipalities and commercial zones on the United States-Mexico border that do not display a valid Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance inspection decal, by certified Federal inspectors, or by State inspectors whose operations are funded in part or in whole by Federal funds, in accordance with the requirements for a Level I Inspection under the criteria of the North American Standard Inspection (as defined in section 350.105 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations), including examination of the driver, vehicle exterior and vehicle under-carriage, and

"(ii) a Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance decal to be affixed to each such commercial vehicle upon completion of the inspection required by clause (i) or a re-inspection if the vehicle has met the criteria for the Level I inspection when no component parts were hidden from view and no evidence of a defect was present, and

"(iii) that any such decal, when affixed, expire at the end of a period of not more than 90 days, but

nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude the Administration from requiring re-inspection of a vehicle bearing a valid inspection decal or from requiring that such a decal be removed when a certified Federal or State inspector determines that such a vehicle has a safety violation subsequent to the inspection for which the decal was granted;"

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this amendment, I have sent to the desk is offered by Senator SHELBY and myself and it will strengthen the truck safety provisions in the bill as reported by the committee.

It will require the Department of Transportation to implement a rigorous inspection regime under which every Mexican truck seeking to travel beyond the commercial zone will be required to be inspected at least every 90 days.

This inspection system has shown some level of success within the State

of California in bringing down the high level of safety noncompliance that has been found in Mexican trucks seeking to cross the border.

We believe that his would improve upon the provisions already in place in the bill as reported by the committee.

I know that Senators MCCAIN and GRAMM have an interest in these provisions. In deference to them, I will not seek adoption of the amendment at this time. I will leave it as the pending amendment to the bill.

If need be, we can temporarily lay the amendment aside and take up amendments on other matters as debate occurs on this bill.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CONRAD. Reserving the right to object, I ask that after Senator DODD completes his remarks, that it be possible for me to address the Senate for a period not to exceed 30 minutes. I make the request to respond to an attack that was made on me by Mr. Lindsey, the President's chief economic adviser.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Washington so amend her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. I amend my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

VIEQUES

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to spend a couple minutes talking about an issue that has received some notoriety in recent months and some specific attention over the last few weeks. That is the issue of the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico and the incarceration of a number of people who went down to express their opposition to the continued use of Vieques as a bombing site.

First of all, I say to those who have demonstrated there and have been sentenced to 30 days—in one case, I think 60 days—I think all of these people involved certainly were aware that when you engage in civil disobedience, there will be a price to be paid for that civil disobedience. I will address the underlying issue of Vieques, but my hope is

that the authorities will recognize that there is some sense of balance in all of this and that 30 days and 60 days may be a bit excessive, to put it mildly, in light of some of the sentences we see meted out on crimes that are far more serious in our society.

I take particular note of my friend Bobby Kennedy from the State of New York and his wife Mary who are wonderful parents. During this period of incarceration, a new son was born to them. Bobby Kennedy, obviously, could not be there for the birth of his son because of his incarceration in Puerto Rico. I know how difficult and painful this was for him and his family. I want them to know that they have my strong sympathies and expressions of support. My hope would have been that Bobby Kennedy might have been able to be with his family during that important moment, despite the fact that he would be the first one to tell us that he understood fully the implications to the action he would take to express what were not only his views but the views of thousands of others within Puerto Rico and beyond the island over the issue of whether or not Vieques ought to be used as a continued site for targeting practice by the U.S. military.

I express my sympathies for Bobby Kennedy, Dennis Rivera, and others who are in prison at this moment for those actions.

There has been a long history here of divergence of interest with respect to the people of Puerto Rico and the Navy's interest in maintaining the capability for important live training exercises on the island of Vieques. Over the years, efforts have been made to reconcile these different interests. During the Clinton administration, in fact, an agreement was reached with the then-Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rossello, that called for the holding of a referendum in November of the year 2001 to allow the residents of Puerto Rico to choose whether to end the military's use of Vieques by 2003 or to indefinitely permit military exercises to continue after that date.

That seemed at the moment to reduce the tensions over this matter and to provide a way for the people of Puerto Rico to express their views. On the idea of a referendum, I was thinking to myself, living in Connecticut, along Long Island Sound where there are small islands off the coast of Connecticut, that if one of our islands were being used as a target by the military, how long we would allow it to persist if the people of my State felt strongly about it. I see the Presiding Officer from the State of Florida with a huge coastline. In many cases, of course, people have tolerated and supported it in their jurisdictions or States.

This is a matter which has provoked tremendous interest on the island of Puerto Rico, a part of the United States, of course.

Since the inauguration of Sila Maria Calderon, the new Governor of Puerto Rico, in January of this year, the ef-

forts by President Clinton and Pedro Rossello, it has become clear that the resolution calling for the referendum in November of 2001 has been sort of put aside, that the plan did not resolve these tensions, despite the good efforts of those involved in crafting that particular solution.

On June 14, in response to continued tensions, President Bush, in consultation with the U.S. Navy, announced that all military exercises in Vieques would cease by May 1, 2003.

That provoked serious voices of dissent within this Chamber. In fact, there were those who were very disappointed by President Bush's decision. I happen to think he made the right decision. I know it was not an easy one to make, but he did listen to the various sides of this story and decided that, given all the information and facts, this was the right decision to make. Naval training on the island was to proceed between then and May of 2003.

In addition, in accordance with the earlier agreement, the Navy returned more than a third of its Vieques holdings to the island on May 1, 2001.

Notwithstanding the Bush announcement, a number of issues have led to increasingly vocal opposition to the continued use of Vieques by the Navy in the interim period. Puerto Rican critics of the Navy cite the loss of economic development opportunities on the island because access to most of the island's land is restricted. They also mention the failure of the Navy to live up to pledges to compensate for these lost economic opportunities.

Damage to the environment and ecology have also been mentioned. Most worrisome, concerns have been raised about the impact the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility has had on the health and safety of the people on the island of Vieques. Were we to put ourselves in the shoes of the mothers and fathers of the children on the island of Vieques, we might better understand to some degree why there is increasing impatience and concern about having to wait 3 years before a potential danger to their loved ones will cease.

The relationship between the Navy and the people of Vieques has been a rocky one, to put it mildly, over the years. More recently the situation has grown from bad to worse. Visits by prominent Members of Congress and other well-known public figures, including the wife of Jesse Jackson and Robert Kennedy Jr., have served to educate Americans writ large about the Vieques issue.

Overly harsh treatment of these protesters by the court has only served to make, in my view, the matter even worse. It seems to me that the time has passed for the relationship between the Navy and the people of Vieques to ever be mended in a satisfactory manner that would allow both to coexist on this little island.

The matter is going to get even more heated, in my view, as the July 29 referendum called for by the Governor of