

district and circuit courts and only 11 of his remaining nominees have both home-State consent and ABA ratings. Despite false attacks on our record, the Senate has acted with bipartisanship, fairness and expedition on this President's judicial nominees, confirming 98 in just 16 months. We have reduced judicial vacancies from the 110 we inherited to fewer than the 65 vacancies the Republicans began with when they took over the Senate in 1995. Unlike the Republican majority that allowed judicial vacancies grow, we have outpaced attrition and reduced the overall level of vacancies, including the vacancies on the circuit courts.

IN MEMORY OF LIVES LOST IN THE BERING SEA ON OCTOBER 20, 2002

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my condolences to the families and friends of men who lost their lives recently because of an accident aboard the *Galaxy*, which was fishing for cod in the Bering Sea.

Aboard the *Galaxy* were First Mate Jerry L. Stephens of Edmonds, Washington; Crewman Jose R. Rodas of Pasco, Washington; and Cook George Karn of Anchorage, Alaska. From the *Clipper Express*: Crewman Daniel Schmiedt of Arlington, Washington.

On October 20, 2002, an explosion occurred aboard the *Galaxy*, a 180-foot vessel fishing for cod off of Alaska's remote Pribilof Islands. Preliminary reports indicate that crew members were battling a small fire below deck when a hatch was opened to allow smoke to escape. This triggered an explosion which ignited multiple fires that quickly superheated its iron hull. With little time to act, the crew scrambled to don survival suits and release lifeboats as they tried to rescue shipmates who had been thrown overboard by the blast.

Captain Dave Shoemaker of Carnation, Washington, sustained burns and broken ribs as he struggled through the fire to make the crucial Mayday call alerting the Coast Guard and other fishing vessels to come to the *Galaxy's* assistance. The heroic efforts of Deck Boss Ryan Newhall of San Antonio, Texas, saved the life of National Marine Fisheries Service biologist Ann Weckback, who was thrown into the icy water without a survival suit. One of the fishing boats which responded to the Mayday call, the *Clipper Express*, was drawn into the tragedy when 24 year old crew member Daniel Schmiedt was swept overboard during the rescue operation.

It may be months until we know what caused the fatal explosion on the *Galaxy*. However, the immediate response of the *Clipper Express* and the other ships that came to the rescue of the *Galaxy's* crew is a testament to the industry. My heart goes out to the families and friends of the four men who died on October 20, 2002. I extend my deep appreciation to all those in the fishing industry and the Coast

Guard who responded quickly to prevent even greater loss of life from this accident.

IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2002

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, the Senate, last night, took a great step toward helping the victims of identity theft, and those law enforcement officers investigating identity theft, by passing S. 1742, the Identity Theft Victims Assistance Act of 2002.

This legislation provides a consistent national remedy for victims of identity theft to restore their credit and their good name. This bill is a critical step in helping victims of identity theft restore their good credit.

Identity theft can be extraordinarily destructive to people's lives. People are denied credit, spend enormous time, effort, and money correcting the problems caused by identity theft, and suffer profound frustration and distress in dealing with the problems that result from identity theft.

These problems often arise when they have the potential to wreak the greatest havoc: when buying a new home or a car, or getting a loan to put a child through college. It can be devastating to make a major life change, only to find out that your creditworthiness has been destroyed by fraud, and it is going to take months of excruciating effort by you to clear your name.

These crimes rarely meet the threshold for prosecution because each crime involves a small amount of money. Meanwhile victims must independently contact numerous federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, consumer credit reporting agencies and creditors over a period of years, as each new event of fraud arises.

One of the most significant problems victims face is gathering the evidence of the fraudulent use of their identity. In order to prove fraud, the victim needs copies of creditors' business records, such as applications, invoices or other information related to the fraudulent transactions. These records are often difficult to obtain because the victim's personally identifying information does not match the fraudulent information on file with the business. Ironically, in the interest of protecting consumer privacy, a business will refuse to provide the information to the victim, believing the victim to be an unauthorized third party.

This bill establishes a nationwide process for all victims of identity theft to obtain business records that are evidence of identity theft to enable a victim to reclaim his or her identity and assist law enforcement in finding the thieves.

This legislation also requires consumer credit agencies to block reporting of bad credit that arises from identity theft, so the harm caused to the victim is stopped dead in its tracks.

The bill also extends the statute of limitation from 2 years to 4 years, giv-

ing victims a reasonable time period to decide whether they need to sue a business under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Finally, the bill amends the Internet False Identification Prevention Act of 2000 to expand the jurisdiction and membership of the Coordinating Committee currently studying enforcement of Federal identity theft law. This will allow the Coordinating Committee to examine State and local identity theft law enforcement and identify ways the federal government can better assist state and local law enforcement in addressing identity theft and related crimes.

The bill is based on a Washington state law enacted in 2001. Other States, including California and Idaho, have enacted similar laws. But identity theft is a national problem growing at an exponential rate. Identity information may be stolen in Washington state and used to perpetrate a fraud in Wisconsin, New Jersey, or Alabama. That is why it is critical that we have passed this bill to help all victims move more quickly and easily through the process of restoring their good name at the least emotional and financial cost as possible.

I thank my colleagues who have worked hard with me to bring this legislation to the floor. Particularly, my thanks goes to Senators ENZI, GRASSLEY and LEAHY, and Banking Committee Chairman SARBANES.

I also want to mention the broad support that this legislation has received. The bill is supported by the National Center for the Victims of Crime, the Fraternal Order of Police, Consumers Union, Identity Theft Resource Center, U.S. Public Interest Group, Police Executive Forum, Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, and Amazon.com, and the Committee has received a letter of support signed by 22 Attorneys General.

The passage yesterday of this legislation is a win for consumers and a win for businesses because identity theft leaves both as victims in its wake. It should be among the highest priorities in the waning days of this Congress that we work together to get the bill enacted into law. The sooner we give victims of identity theft these tools, the more victims we will help and the fewer businesses that will be defrauded by identity theft in the future.

LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND ATTORNEYS CAN IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am very proud to join my friend and colleague, Senator DEWINE, as an original cosponsor of two important bills, S. 3165 and S. 3166, to offer loan forgiveness to social workers and attorneys willing to work in the child welfare field. Senator DEWINE has been an inspiring leader on child welfare issues for many years, and I am delighted to work closely with him to continue to

seek ways to improve the administrative agencies and legal courts that serve such vulnerable children.

The bills are designed to encourage students graduating with social work degrees and law degrees to spend several years working in the child welfare system. Eligible students would receive loan forgiveness for working in child welfare agencies and courts for abused and neglected children. The amount of loan forgiveness would increase over time to reward experience, and to retain social workers and attorneys in the system.

Every day, approximately 500,000 children are in the foster care system. Services to such children need to be improved so that every child's health and safety is paramount, and every child secures a permanent home. These priorities were established in the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, thanks to the leadership of Senator DEWINE and a bipartisan coalition. To achieve such bold goals, we must have trained, committed social workers and skilled attorneys serving such children and their families.

There is a compelling need to invest in social workers. The turnover rate for child welfare agencies has doubled in the past decade. Making decisions about a child's health and safety is a serious challenge, and we need more experienced and trained social workers to serve children and their families.

Many social workers are burdened with a staggering caseload. The number of social workers per children in the child welfare system varies widely from state to state, and not all states even report their child protective services workforce data. Still, we know there is a compelling need in many places. The Child Maltreatment 2000 Report published by the Department of Health and Human Services indicates that the national average is 130 children per investigative workers, and several states acknowledge that workers have over 200 children to monitor and assess. Obviously, we need to recruit and retain qualified social workers to serve children and families at risk.

Experienced attorneys are also needed to help manage the individual cases and to help ensure that the bold, new time frames established by the Adoption and Safe Families Act are met. Under this new law, courts face stricter requirements to monitor and make decisions about a child's safety, health, and placement in a permanent home. This means qualified attorneys need to work with the courts, the agencies, and the families.

In West Virginia, and across our country, children and families in the child welfare system need and deserve qualified social workers and attorneys. Senator DEWINE's bill to offer student loan forgiveness would provide the right incentive to recruit and retain new professionals in the system. It would be a meaningful addition to the Higher Education Act reauthorization.

SOWING THE SEEDS FOR DEMOCRACY IN CROATIA

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to my colleagues' attention the Civitas International Civic Education Exchange Program—a program that is helping to promote democratic principles in emerging and established democracies throughout the world.

The Civitas Exchange Program, administered by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act, engages educators from around the world in the development of effective civic education initiatives that can be implemented in their own countries. The program provides international leaders in civic education the opportunity to learn from one another and to assist each other in improving education for democracy in their nations.

The Civitas Exchange Program makes use of the experience, expertise, and programmatic offerings of U.S.-based State and national civic education centers by linking them in partnerships with public and private sector entities in emerging and advanced democracies. The partnerships serve to institutionalize civic education in these nations, creating working relationships that lead to tangible results for both American and international students and teachers. Today the Civitas Exchange Program is operating in 30 countries linked with 22 American States.

One of those partnerships involves my home State of Oregon, and the States of Delaware and Maryland, linked with the country of Croatia. Marilyn Cover, the executive director of the Classroom Law Project in Portland, OR, manages the partnership. Ms. Cover recently brought a delegation of American teachers and Croatian educators to Capitol Hill to observe our system of government first hand. I am pleased to recognize the two Oregonian teachers participating in the exchange, Bert Key from Sandy Union High School in Sandy, OR and Maggie McSwiggen, from Vocational Village in Portland, OR. I would also like to recognize the Croatian teachers in the delegation, Jadranka Kostanjak from Zagreb, Jasminka Zagorac from Zagreb, and Natalija Palcic from Split.

These teachers, and others from Delaware and Maryland, are currently working with teachers from Croatia to develop a series of lessons comparing the Constitutions of the United States and Croatia, examining political parties within each country, and exploring ideas of personal and civic responsibility for use in their respective classes. Begun during a summer writing program, the teachers continue to refine their lessons through team teaching in classrooms in both the United States and Croatia. It is an excellent example of the reciprocal nature of the exchange, which provides benefits to American students and international students alike.

The ideas exchanged in Oregon's partnership have led to at least two significant developments with the support of the Croatian Ministry of Education and Sport: first, as part of the exchange, an American civics curriculum, Foundations of Democracy program on justice, has been translated and is now a requirement in Croatian preschools and primary schools; second, We the People . . . Project Citizen, an American civic education program which engages young people in learning how to monitor and influence public policy, has become a requirement in grades 7 and 8 for secondary schools in Croatia.

The Civitas Exchange Program is an excellent example of how programs supported by the federal government can help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping emerging democracies develop a political culture supportive of democratic values, principles, and institutions. I wish to thank the Center for Civic Education for their successful administration of the Civitas program and applaud Oregonian Marilyn Cover for her excellent work in the project.

RETIREMENT OF SENATOR FRED THOMPSON

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and recognize the accomplishments of a colleague who will be retiring at the end of this term. Senator FRED THOMPSON has represented Tennessee in the Senate for 8 years. During his tenure, he has been an important advocate for a wide range of legislative reform activities.

Throughout his Senate career, Senator THOMPSON has fought for protecting our national security, making government more efficient, and improving programs that are important to America's families, such as Social Security and Medicare. Senator THOMPSON has also been nationally recognized for his expertise in international affairs as was evidenced by his recent nomination to the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations.

As the ranking member of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, FRED THOMPSON held more than a dozen hearings on important national security issues, including missile defense technology and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a result of his efforts, Senator THOMPSON played a key role in bringing the issue of weapons proliferation to the forefront of the national agenda.

In addition, FRED THOMPSON has been the leader in many efforts to reform and improve government. He has strongly supported proposals to streamline the regulatory process and to ensure the cost-effectiveness and benefit of regulatory programs. As the primary author of the Government Information Security Act, he also championed efforts to enhance the security of government computer systems and to strengthen privacy protection on Federal Web sites.