

Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 11 at 2:30 p.m., to hold a closed hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 11, 2003, at 2:30 p.m.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider S. 432, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct and support research into alternative treatments for timber produced from public lands and lands withdrawn from the public domain for the National Forest System and for other purposes; S. 511, which would provide permanent funding for the payment in lieu of taxes program, and for other purposes; S. 849, which would provide for a land exchange in the State of Arizona between the Secretary of Agriculture and Yavapai Ranch Limited Partnership, and S. 1582, which would amend the Valles Caldera Preservation Trust Act.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Spencer Chambers, a staff person in my office who does not currently have floor privileges, be admitted to the floor.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask unanimous consent that Kris Schaffer of my staff be given floor privileges during consideration of this Energy and water bill.

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

The Senator from Virginia.

PROVIDING FOR THE ADJUSTMENT OF CERTAIN FEDERAL ANNUITY COMPUTATIONS

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 978, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 978) to amend chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that certain Federal annuity computations are adjusted by 1 percentage point relating to periods of receiving disability payments, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 978) was read the third time and passed.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, it is altogether fitting that we have finally accomplished this idea on the second anniversary of the violent and dastardly attacks of September 11, 2001. Several survivors of that tragic day helped inspire this legislation, which will adjust Federal employees' retirement computations to offset reductions in the retirement amounts arising from on-the-job injuries covered under the workers compensation program.

I thank my colleague, JOHN WARNER of Virginia, for cosponsoring the measure. I particularly thank Kay Cole James in the Office of Personnel Management and her staff for working with me on this measure for well over a year now. Moreover, I wish to thank my colleague, Senator SUSAN COLLINS of Maine, whose leadership today, earlier this year, and last year helped move this measure several times through the procedural hoops of the Senate. Finally, we have gotten it passed on the House side.

Mr. President, this bill addresses a problem in the retirement program for Federal employees that has been recognized for a long time but unresolved since 1986, when the current retirement system was established. Unfortunately, complications arising from the Tax Code and the Workers Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have blocked any solution.

My resolve to introduce this bill and address this problem was inspired by Ms. Louise Kurtz, a Federal employee from Virginia who was severely injured in the September 11 attack, 2 years ago today, on the Pentagon. She worked at the Pentagon as a civil service employee. She suffered burns from the impact of American Airlines Flight 77, but even with all these burns, she still was trying to rescue and help others get out. She suffered burns on over 70 percent of her body. I have seen her several times. In fact, I saw her last year, at the Project Phoenix, the re-opening and dedication of the Pentagon. She had no fingers left—just little nubs, really. Her ears were mostly burned off as well. She is a person, though, who continues to endure these painful surgeries and faces other surgeries in the future. She wants to continue with her rehabilitation. She still hopes to return to work someday.

Current law, however, does not allow Mrs. Kurtz to contribute to her retirement program while she is recuperating and receiving workers compensation disability payments. As a result, after returning to work and eventually retiring, she will find herself inadequately prepared and unable to afford to retire because of the lack of contributions during her recuperation and rehabilitation.

As Mrs. Kurtz's situation reveals, Federal employees under the Federal employees retirement system who have sustained an on-the-job injury and are

receiving disability compensation from the Department of Labor's Office of Workers Compensation Programs are unable to make contributions or payments into Social Security or the Thrift Savings Plan. Therefore, under the current situation, which is being changed by this law, future retirement benefits from both sources—the Thrift Savings Plan and Social Security—are reduced.

This legislation offsets the reductions in Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan retirement benefits by increasing the Federal Employees Retirement System's direct benefit calculation by 1 percentage point for the extended periods of disability.

Mr. President, you have probably already heard my talk about this bill because we have actually passed this measure twice in the Senate. We passed it once on October 17, 2002, and then again in July of this year, 2003. As a lead sponsor of the bill, I was pleased to see that my colleague on the House side, Congresswoman JO ANN DAVIS, with her persistence, finally got the House of Representatives to pass this measure yesterday. By taking this matter up and passing it in the Senate today, we are clearing it for the President's signature.

The passage of this bill ensures that the pensions of our hard-working Federal employees will be kept whole during a period of injury and recuperation, especially now that many of them are on the front lines in protecting our homeland security in this new and ongoing war against terror. By protecting the retirement security of injured Federal employees, we have provided an incentive for them to return to work and increased our ability to retain our most dedicated and experienced Federal workers. This is a reasonable and fair approach, in which the whole Senate acted in a logical and compassionate manner last fall, and, of course, we did so in July, and we have done so again today.

On the second anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania after the brave efforts of those passengers, I thank my colleagues for once again passing this compassionate legislation honoring and helping some of the survivors of these horrific events.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES TO THE NATION

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on Sunday night in his televised address to the

Nation, the President of the United States outlined clearly and unequivocally why we are at war and what is required to defeat our enemies. In his remarks, he urged us to remain steadfast and resolute. In that speech, he reminded us that our enemies are motivated not by the perception that we are strong. No. Indeed, they attacked us out of the mistaken belief that we are weak.

This is not mere guess or conjecture. When one listens to the words of Osama bin Laden himself, he calls America "a paper tiger." He boasts that at the first sign of danger, that first painful blow, we retreat to wallow in our so-called—his words—decadence.

The terrorists did not launch the September 11 attacks in retaliation to military action. They struck America as a direct demonstration of their pure and unshakable hatred. One only has to listen to the words of one of Osama bin Laden's closest associates, Yussuf al-Ayyeri—no longer with us, I might add, in body. This murderer warned in a treatise written just before Operation Iraqi Freedom that:

It is not the American war machine that should be of the utmost concern to Muslims. What threatens the future of Islam, in fact its very survival, is American democracy.

Why? Mr. al-Ayyeri fears democracy will—

... make Muslims love this world, forget the next world, and abandon jihad.

He fears that if democracy takes root in Iraq, Muslims might actually benefit in the here and in the now, that they might become prosperous, self-sufficient, tolerant, and consequently—going back to quoting him:

... reluctant to die in martyrdom.

For this reason, and he explains in the treatise, his comrades must defeat unbelief, must defeat modernism, and most of all must defeat the democracy brought on by the Americans.

While Mr. al-Ayyeri falsely conflates his power-mad ideology with the Muslim faith, a faith that we all know is practiced peacefully by millions in this country and indeed around the world, one cannot deny, however, unwittingly, that he makes his case. Success in Iraq spells failure for al-Qaida, failure for al-Qaida's murderous fanaticism, failure for al-Qaida's tyrannical goals. Success in Iraq strikes at the cold, arid hearts of men who murder Muslims for daring to reject al-Qaida's warped demands.

Our efforts to help the Iraqi people build a decent and free nation, yes, a democratic society where people of differing ideas, of differing ethnicity can live in peace, live with one another, will be a clear refutation of all that the terrorists stand for and the poison that they continue to peddle.

September 11—most Americans have spent much of the day in thought and reflection on that event 2 years ago. I wish, as every American, that September 11 had never happened, that those innocent women and men and children were alive today, were with

their families, were thriving, were safe. I wish our enemies had never emerged from their caves and they never cooked up their crazed campaign. I wish all these things. But clearly wishing will not and does not make it so.

Thus, we are called to act. We are called to lead. We must protect our fellow citizens and defeat terror and those regimes that support them. Our enemies will not disappear or go away. It is not going to happen. We know that. Words do not in any way mollify them. Negotiation in no way mollifies them. Thus, we must stand firm and we must not waver.

We must support our troops; let them know how much we admire their courage, their sacrifice, their bravery. We must let the enemy know that America will press on to victory.

I know we will meet the challenge. Americans are strong and Americans are tough. We have seen that tenacity. In many ways September 11 made it come alive. It uplifted all of us, but it made that tenacity and that strength come alive.

We are sincere in our compassion. Why? Because it springs from the fundamental belief that all people have a God-given right to liberty, to freedom, to know what is in their own minds and to control their own futures; freedom to act in a room and a body like this in the political sphere; freedom to participate in their own governance. And, unlike our deadly enemies, we wish the best—not the worst—for Iraq.

The President has come this week to this body seeking our support. It really began formally in his speech now 5 days ago on Sunday night. His proposal for emergency funding to defeat terror and to stabilize our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly warrants it.

We will continue to meet with the administration in the days ahead, as we have in the last several days, to assist them in these efforts. I know there will be much debate and there will be careful examination of the request, but I know the Senate will overwhelmingly support the President's request. Why? We think back to September 11. We know who the enemy is and we know what it takes to defeat that enemy.

Over the course of the week and in our briefings and after we talked to our colleagues who have gone to Iraq, it is very clear that we are making a lot of progress in Iraq. It is not what you see when you first turn on the television or when you open the newspapers now, but from our colleagues who have gone there to see firsthand, and as we have been briefed by people who have just come back, clearly, we are making progress.

Just this week the League of Arab States granted the Iraqi Governing Council membership, albeit conditional membership but membership, in their deliberative body. This is a significant step forward. There will be many more steps forward in the coming weeks and months ahead. I know we will succeed in this mission. We will defeat terror.

And the Iraqi people will have a free and a democratic nation to lead into the future.

AN INSPIRATIONAL DAY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will talk a little bit on another topic for a couple of minutes, in large part because we began this morning opening at 8:30, and over the course of the morning I personally, in part representing this body, have had a wonderful day. It was a day that was truly inspiring if you look at public service, but also if you look at the sacrifice that others made on September 11 and since that time, and others who continue to make right now in Iraq and Afghanistan to preserve the freedoms and liberties that we have.

We opened this morning with a commemoration, a bell ringing, and had a moment of silence with that glorious sound of that bell dramatically ringing for each of the incidents and the tragedies that occurred on September 11.

Over the course of the day on this floor, we have heard our colleagues on both sides of the aisle reminisce, talk about what they were doing then but also how they have been affected as public servants in dealing with others, how people have been brought together, how the common threads which bind all of us have been stressed a little bit more the last couple of years than maybe in the previous years.

A little bit later in the morning I had an opportunity to go by the Pentagon. At the Pentagon I saw the reconstruction. I had the real privilege of having the Speaker of the House give to Secretary Rumsfeld the flag that was flying over the east wing of the Capitol 2 years ago.

We were in the chapel in the part of the Pentagon that was struck. In that new chapel are four beautiful stained-glass windows dedicated to the events, to the families, and to the institution—all related to September 11.

Coming back here a little bit later, the Congress—Members of the House and Senate, and others—were on the front steps of the Capitol not too far from where I am speaking now on the floor of the Senate. It was very reminiscent of that night 2 years ago when we were on the steps. We made a statement. It was a spontaneous statement that the terrorists will not shut down our Government, where we joined hands and sang "God Bless America" on the night of September 11.

Then later this afternoon—just a few minutes ago—we had a wonderful service with our Senate family, staff, Senators, President pro tempore, and the Senate Chaplain and the House Chaplain, again reflecting late this afternoon on the events of 2 years ago. It was a wonderful 10 minutes when the Chaplain said: "I just want three people to volunteer to come forward and