on the occasion of the 200th Habitat home constructed in South Dakota since 1990. I believe I speak for all South Dakotans when I say that their services have been invaluable to many families in our State.

The lack of affordable housing for the lowest income households is a serious problem across the country. According to the 2003 State of the Nation's Housing report issued by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, three in 10 U.S. households have housing affordability problems. More than 14 million households spend more than half of their income for housing, and 75 percent of them are in the bottom 20 percent of the population by income.

Having to pay a disproportionate share of income for housing frequently leads to other problems and tensions for many families. Too often, the available housing is substandard, and overcrowded. Many of these families live on the edge, financially, and live in fear of eviction or foreclosure. Families may have to sacrifice spending for other basics, including food and utilities. Children in these families also tend to pay a price. They suffer when their parents have to work two or more jobs, or odd hours, sacrificing family time. Unstable housing arrangements and frequent moves can also interfere with a child's ability to succeed in school.

Habitat for Humanity recognizes that when communities come together, they can help solve this problem, one family at a time. Their accomplishments would not be possible without the thousands of volunteers who help support a struggling family, and provide them with the opportunity to turn a Habitat house into their very own home. Volunteers from across South Dakota have donated thousands of hours of hard labor to give 200 families a shot at the American dream.

I would like to take a moment to thank Pat Helgeland, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity in South Dakota, and everyone associated with South Dakota's affiliates for their solid commitment and hard work. They are truly making an important difference in the lives of their partner families.

Every time I visit with Habitat volunteers, I am impressed by their energy and spirit as they raise funds, select a site, select a partner family, and build the house. I was pleased to sponsor a house in Brookings, SD, that will now become a home for a mother and her three children.

I am also encouraged to know that Habitat for Humanity is engaged in a similar effort at the international level. From Thailand to Zimbabwe to Peru, its services provide exciting opportunities for home ownership. We should be proud, for example, that HFHI played a key role in providing tools and materials needed to rebuild or repair family homes damaged by years of conflict in Afghanistan.

So today I wish to extend my congratulations and thanks to all those who helped build 200 new houses in South Dakota, as well as those who are involved in bringing this important model to communities across the globe. Their efforts are truly inspirational.

REMEMBERING PAUL WELLSTONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart. It was one year ago on October 25 that I lost my friend, and this body lost a great Senator. We all have our own memories of Paul Wellstone.

We remember the passion of his beliefs. He was an uncompromising idealist who stuck to his principles and never wavered. When he fought for an issue like mental health parity, you knew he would never give up.

We remember Paul Wellstone for his bravery, because even when his cause was unpopular, he followed his heart. He used to say, ''We should never separate the lives we live from the words we speak,'' and he followed that path.

We remember what an inspiring speaker Paul could be. The first time I heard him was in the Capitol Rotunda at a ceremony for new Senators, and I was immediately impressed. Later, he came to Las Vegas and spoke to a convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have never seen a group so fired up.

We remember his physical strength and stamina, even in the last year of his life when he was in so much pain. He worked out at the Capitol Police gym, and he still holds the record there for doing the most chin-ups.

We remember Paul for his unassuming nature. He waged his first campaign in an old green school bus. There is no telling how many mechanics across the State of Minnesota worked on that vehicle to keep it running.

We remember Paul Wellstone for all these reasons. Most of all, we will always remember how easily he made friends and how deeply he touched people.

In this Chamber he had good friends on both sides of the aisle. But Paul Wellstone also befriended working people, like the janitors who cleaned his Senate office. One night, Paul waited until midnight so he could meet them in person and tell them thanks. And in Minnesota, the affection for Paul Wellstone cut across all segments of the population.

A few days before he lost his life, Paul was riding around the State with Peg McGlinch, a member of my staff who is a Minnesota native, and her father. They were running behind schedule, as is often the case on those hectic campaign trips, but when they spotted some union workers on a picket line, there was no question that they would stop and offer support. As Paul hopped out of the nondescript car, people seemed shocked to see him, until one woman ran over, gave him a big hug, and declared, ''You're my hero.''

Paul Wellstone was a hero to a lot of people. I went to Minnesota after his death, and I was amazed at the spontaneous memorial that sprang up all around his campaign headquarters. I saw thousands of flowers and candles. I read handwritten notes thanking Paul for work he had done to help people, and looked at pictures of him with people whose lives he had affected.

And one thing I will never forget was a crayon drawing of a train chugging up into the sky, with a child's simple scrawl that read, ''Paul Wellstone, the Little Engine that Could.''

Paul Wellstone clearly had a special relationship with the people of Minnesota. His relationship with his beloved wife, Sheila, was also extraordinary. And their lovely daughter Marcia, who also perished in the tragic accident, was so much like both of them. She was an amalgam of all their best qualities.

Today, as we remember how much Paul Wellstone meant to so many people, our hearts go out to his family—his sons Mark and David, his grandchildren, and other family members. Also to the families of Paul's staff members who were lost with him: Mary McEvoy, Will McLaughlin, and Tom Lapic.

I said my heart was heavy today, and that is true. Paul Wellstone was my friend and I miss him. But I also feel grateful today that I had the opportunity to know this remarkable man, and I am grateful for my memories of him, which will never die.

SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH EQUITABLE TREATMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, in memory of the anniversary over the weekend of the death of our friend Paul Wellstone, I rise to reiterate my support for the mental health parity legislation on which he worked tirelessly. I am a proud original cosponsor of S. 486. The Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2003, which was reintroduced this year by Senators DOMENICI and KENNEDY in honor of Senator Paul Wellstone. This important legislation will provide people with a mental illness more access to treatment.

Specifically, S. 846 prohibits a group health plan that offers mental health benefits from placing discriminatory caps, access limitations, financial requirements or other restrictions on treatment that are different from other medical and surgical benefits. In other words, S. 486 treats physical and mental health equally. This bill is modeled after the mental health benefits provided through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, but provides a special exemption for small employers from such requirements.

I have long advocated on behalf of our Nation's rural health care delivery system and mental health parity is a key step to increasing access to mental health services in rural areas. The Domenici-Kennedy bill is crucial to

rural America because suicide rates among rural residents are twice the rate of urban areas, and 75 percent of the 518 nationally designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas are located in rural areas.

The Senator Paul Wellstone Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act of 2003 must be passed by Congress as soon as possible, and I urge all my colleagues to work toward its enactment.

AIR POLLUTION

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today the Bush Administration took direct aim against the health of all Americans, but particularly those who are the most vulnerable to air pollution—the elderly, the children, and the poor. As a result of this frenzy to gut the Clean Air Act, millions more of our citizens will now be staring down the barrel of a smokestack.

The administration's new rule on New Source Review adds to all the woes and worries that people must face everyday. These new threats include more illness, lung disease, and heart attacks.

This Bush administration's EPA is not his father's EPA. At almost every turn, this President Bush is seeking to undo the positive environmental legacy of his father, with a particular focus on tearing apart the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

From the beginning, the first President Bush was the motivating force behind passage of that complex, politically balanced and protective act. In fact, it was his acid rain proposal that broke the legislative logjam just before passage. His participation during Senate consideration helped ensure passage from this body, and the technical assistance of his Federal agencies was critical throughout the process.

I was proud to work with the first President Bush and his team. But I am not proud of what the current President Bush has done on the environment. He and his team came to Washington claiming a desire and ability to work across the aisle. But that hasn't turned out to be the case.

This President Bush and his team have intervened in environmental policy throughout the administration on behalf of polluters, not for the health and welfare of the American public and a sustainable environment. This is a huge contrast with the first President Bush who cared about these matters and cooperatively worked with Congress to address environmental problems.

We did not solve all the problems related to air pollution in the 1990 amendments. But, through bipartisan cooperation, we built a strong legal construct and a renewed commitment to gradual and continual reductions in harmful emissions. It has survived legal challenges and until 2001 was working quite effectively from a health and an economic perspective.

That is when the new Bush administration came to town. They have embarked on a comprehensive program to dismantle or slow walk the Clean Air Act, starting with the New Source Review program and extending to the ozone and fine particulate matter standards.

Their Clear Skies proposal is weaker and slower than the existing Clean Air Act, if it were fully and faithfully implemented on schedule. The Bush proposal delays the achievement of air quality standards beyond the act or my bill, the Clean Power Act. In the name of ''flexibility,'' their proposal does away with vital programs designed to protect local and regional air quality, some of which have been particularly important to the Northeast.

Based on the scientific evidence before us, we know that the 1990 amendments did not go far enough in specifically controlling pollutants that cause acid rain, global warming and toxic contamination. However, they did provide the Administrator with ample authority to take action to address these matters. Instead, this administration has chosen the path of delay, non-enforcement, or deregulation.

Government regulation must protect the public's health. But, the administration changed the New Source Review rules while Americans enjoyed the last of their summer vacations to allow greater levels of pollution than currently emitted. Some analyses suggest that as many as 20,000 more premature deaths may occur annually as a result—20,000 deaths. The administration released this terrible news when they thought no one would pay attention.

I have seen charts showing deaths per hundred thousand people who die prematurely from ''grandfathered'' powerplant pollution. These are the powerplants that haven't put on modern controls. These are the same powerplants that will Never be required to clean up to modern standards under the Bush administration's new NSR rule. Never. And it is not just powerplants.

Adding insult to that injury, the administration's new rule is plainly illegal. So I will be joining with other colleagues in Congress, the States, public health and environmental organizations, and other members of the public in litigation to stop this newest assault on our air quality. The States and attorneys general are filing today.

The Clean Air Act says, and I quote: ''. . . any physical change in, or change in the method of operation of, a stationary source which increases the amount of any air pollutant emitted by such source'' triggers New Source Review, NSR. That means if a change or modification increases emissions of air pollutants, then the law requires sources to put on modern pollution control technology. It is that simple.

This doesn't mean letting polluters reach back 10 years to pick the highest possible emissions baseline from which EPA would then judge the increase. Common sense and case law says that the regulators must use recent actual emissions levels.

EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air, Jeff Holmstead, admitted the rule will ''in some cases'' allow increases in pollution. That is why it is illegal.

Mr. Holmstead defends this indefensible rule by suggesting that its harm will be limited because sources will not be allowed to exceed their permitted levels while making these modifications. Sadly, that is wrong and its disingenuous. Harm will not be limited, it will be spread downwind of 17,000 plants.

Permitted levels for many sources are substantially above their recent average emissions levels. So sources can now increase their pollution above levels that would have been allowed prior to this rule. That means millions of additional tons of pollutants.

The new rule lets emissions increase at facilities without review. That contradicts the Clean Air Act's statutory language and Congress' intent. Government officials who issue such illegal rules betray the public's trust and commit malfeasance in my book.

Mr. Holmstead told Fox News that, ''We can say categorically that pollution will not increase as a result of this rule.'' The next day on the PBS ''Newshour,'' he agreed that the rule would allow emissions increases in some cases. Which is true?

Mr. Holmstead also had similar trouble giving clear and direct answers to questions during our July 16, 2002, joint hearing between the Judiciary Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee.

He said he was advised by Agency and DOJ enforcment personnel that the proposed NSR changes wouldn't affect the ongoing enforcement actions. The General Accounting Office report and the statements of former Agency enforcement personnel say otherwise. Which is true? We have asked the EPA Inspector General to investigate.

NSR was not designed to encourage emissions increases. Instead, Congress created it to help continually reduce air emissions as sources upgraded their facilities. As they make those improvements, they are supposed to put on modern pollution controls, not be exempt from that duty.

I am afraid that this rule is part of an administration agenda to lock in air pollution increases for a long time to come.

The timing of the rule takes advantage of the gap in the permit process for these plants in the period between the new and old ozone standards.

The permitted levels that Mr. Holmstead mentioned are part of the States' plans to achieve attainment with air quality standards, including the 1-hour ozone standard. That standard will soon be replaced by a more stringent one known as the 8-hour standard. That standard is more protective of public health.

As Mr. Holmstead knows, polluters ''permitted levels'' are closely tied to States' plans to achieve the old 1-hour standard. They are not yet tied to the