

It is not hyperbole, in my view, to say that this change to the Section 8 voucher program could have disastrous effects. Section 8, administered by the department of Housing and Urban Development, helps nearly 2 million poor families and disabled citizens pay for housing with vouchers that have traditionally covered the full cost of their rent.

But under the rule change, the reimbursements will no longer cover the full costs. As a result, housing authorities around the country will have to cut back on the number of vouchers they offer.

For fiscal year 2005, the President's request shortchanges all housing vouchers now in use by \$1.6 billion and could result in further cuts in the years ahead. This request would also remove key provisions of the Section 8 program that protect families with the lowest incomes, such as maintaining rent payments at 30 percent of a resident's income.

In my home state of Vermont, there are 6,080 authorized vouchers available this year, but Vermont stands to lose 740 of these by next year with the rule change. That translates to a loss of more than \$4 million in housing assistance in Vermont. And this scenario could indeed get worse: it is estimated that my state stands to lose up to 1, 770 housing vouchers by the year 2009.

It is important to remind ourselves that we're not talking about just numbers here. These are families—real families—who will be at risk of not having a place to live.

I recently read in the Washington Post that the Bush administration is making three changes in an effort to "constrain rapid growth in the program's spending." However, the increased demand for Section 8 housing arises because more people need help in our ailing economy.

Every day in our country, working families are forced to turn to emergency shelters and food banks because they cannot afford the high cost of rent, child care and transportation. I believe this change in section 8 will add greatly to those numbers, while undermining our deeply held premise that work leads to self-sufficiency.

Every day we hear the term "working poor," but I'm afraid we do not take the time to fully understand its meaning.

All of this prompts me to ask, once again, where are our nation's priorities? We continue to give out tax breaks to millionaires despite an ever-mounting deficit. We pour billions of dollars into fighting a war in Iraq for which there is no end in sight. And we will be spending billions more—there is another \$25 billion request before us now—to rebuild that country while our own nation's poorest citizens cannot afford housing.

If I may borrow a line from Rita Markley, the executive director of the largest homeless services program in my state, "We've got to remind people that Homeland Security starts with a home."

It is unfortunate that President Bush continues to find fault with a program that has demonstrated such success. As the Congress deliberates the fiscal year 2005 budget, I will continue to work to protect the Section 8 program.

Forty years ago, when President Johnson declared war on poverty, he highlighted this nation's commitment "to pursue victory over the most ancient of mankind's enemies."

I fear that we have lost sight of the enemy, at the expense of those who needed this victory the most.

RECOGNIZING PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, for the past 5 days, I have paid tribute to the Nation's public servants during Public Service Recognition Week through statements on the floor of the U.S. Senate. As this is the 20th annual celebration of public service, it was fitting to focus the Senate's attention on public servants and issues affecting Federal employees throughout the week.

Today I would like to recognize those Federal, State, and local government programs that received the Public Service Excellence Awards. The Public Service Excellence Awards recognize and commend U.S. programs and employee teams who represent public service at its best. It rewards innovations, raises awareness of exemplary public service, and provides public agencies a showcase for outstanding programs. On May 3, 2004, the Public Employees Roundtable, a nonprofit coalition of organizations representing public employees and retirees, held a Breakfast of Champions to honor the award winners for this year.

This year, the Federal winner was the "Internal Revenue Service (IRS) eLearning Program." As my colleagues on the Governmental Affairs Committee know, training our Federal workforce is one of the most important and most underfunded programs in the Federal Government. Even when training programs are funded, agencies must use innovative techniques to stretch training dollars and apply training funds strategically. The IRS realized that approximately 70 percent of its training budget went toward travel to and from the seminars. As such, eLearning could save the IRS a significant amount of money by converting its training system from a classroom-based to a technology-enhanced learning and performance support environment. In the initial phase of the program, the IRS saved more than \$5 million in travel costs by using the technology for briefings required of all 120,000 employees and courses supporting the 28,000 employees of Customer Call Center Operations. At full implementation, the eLearning strategy is expected to save more than \$50 million in annual travel costs and reduce training time by up to one-third. This innovative program at IRS is an excellent example of the dedicated work and professional excellence of federal employees.

The State winner is the "Work that Matters" campaign by the Montana Education Association and the Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA-MFT). The "Work that Matters" public relations campaign was created in 2003 to prevent the Montana Legislature from freezing salaries of State employees. "Work That Matters" is about putting a face on the people who provide state services and showing them as dedicated, hardworking people, who care about the people they serve.

As my colleagues know, all too often government employees are forced to "tighten their belts" during times of financial difficulties. That trend is no different for State governments across the United States. In Montana, the beginning of the 2003 legislative session had State employees struggling with hiring freezes, layoffs, staff shortages, and salaries far below market value. This public relations program put a face to the government employees who carry out the programs and services that benefit taxpayers, the State legislature realized the importance of public service and passed a pay increase.

This year's local winner was the City of Chicago's "311 Service," which provides a one-stop telephone and online customer service center for all non-emergency city services. It is a comprehensive, high-tech, customer-focused information and response service. Chicago residents can use the system to make service needs known, check on the status of earlier requests, file police reports, and get information on city programs and events. In addition, the 311 service is synchronized with Chicago's 911 emergency service. Such interoperability is commendable because all too often the non-emergency services are overlooked when developing an emergency response system. "Chicago 311" is an innovative and effective way for public employees to serve the community.

The Public Service Roundtable also recognized a non-profit organization, which was founded by a retired federal employee. Scott Dimock and his partner, Sammie Morrison, created Southeast White House community center in Washington, DC which has made an incredible impact on an area troubled by high unemployment, lack of opportunity, and broken promises. Through the use of donated services, time, and money, Southeast White House has developed a mentoring program, a Friends of Children program, a People's House referral service for services throughout the Metropolitan area, and an activities program that includes summer camps, field trips, lessons and programs in a variety of subjects, Mom's Night Out, and weekly community banquets open to all.

In addition, Southeast White House has adopted an elementary school and has developed an intensive mentoring program for at-risk children. More than 100 elementary school children

now receive up to eight hours of mentoring each week. While not technically part of a federal, state, or local government organization, it is easy to see the dedication public servants, both active and retired, bring to their nation and their neighbor.

I would also like to commend GEICO, the Government Employees Insurance Company, for creating the GEICO Public Service Awards which, since 1980, recognizes the work Federal employees do to make their communities better. The awards recognizes government employees for outstanding achievements in one of four areas: substance abuse prevention and treatment, fire prevention and safety, physical rehabilitation, and traffic safety and accident prevention. In addition, one retired Federal employee is honored for his or her work in one of those areas. Recipients of the 2003 awards are:

Charles Whitlock, fire safety project leader for the U.S. Forest Service Technology & Development Center in Missoula, MT, for his work in fire safety and prevention.

Amanda Tye, county executive director of the Cleveland County Office for the Farm Service Agency, for her work in traffic safety and accident prevention.

Carolyn D. Greene, program support assistant for the Louis Stokes V.A. Medical Center in Cleveland, OH, for her work in substance abuse prevention and treatment.

Ralph P. Fowler, a telecommunications specialist for the United States Army in El Paso, TX, for his work in physical rehabilitation.

George S. Klein, a retired general forecaster with the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Upton, NY, for his work in physical rehabilitation.

As Public Service Recognition Week draws to an end, I would like to once again commend those who have been honored for their dedication to public service, as well as those unsung heroes whose daily contributions we could not live without. I also want to thank the companies, associations, and other employee organizations who work to make Public Service Recognition Week such a success and for their commitment in honoring our Nation's Federal, State, and local government employees.

REQUEST FOR SEQUENTIAL REFERRAL—S. 2386

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent a letter to the Honorable BILL FRIST dated May 6, 2004, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2004.

Hon. BILL FRIST,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: Pursuant to section 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, I request

that S. 2386, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, which was reported out on May 5, 2004, by the Select Committee on Intelligence, be sequentially referred to the Committee on Armed Services for a period not to exceed thirty days of session.

With kind regards, I am
Sincerely,

JOHN WARNER,
Chairman.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HUGH ROBINSON

• Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Hugh Robinson of southeast Missouri, who is retiring today after a long career in farm broadcasting. I am honored to share his successes with my colleagues.

Hugh followed a path from Washington, DC to Missouri. Growing up in Washington and graduating from Anacostia High School, Hugh has been interested and involved in agriculture most of his life. He knew about U.S. Department of Agriculture through his father, who had been an agricultural attaché for the Foreign Agricultural Service in Sweden and Germany. With that experience he had the opportunity to observe farm and livestock operations in other countries firsthand.

Since 1998, he has been at KBXB, where he has been the only live, local, farm director in southeast Missouri doing 10 reports a day, 4 news and 6 market reports.

He is a voting member of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, and has been involved in the organization since 1978. Hugh has received numerous awards including: The Missouri Farm Bureau's Outstanding Service to Agriculture, the Missouri House of Representatives' Meritorious Service Award and awards from the Missouri Corn Growers Association, Missouri Soybean Association, as well as FFA and 4H.

More than that, he is widely admired by his colleagues in farm broadcasting and among Missouri's agriculture leaders.

I have known Hugh for many years now and I have always appreciated his diligence and great sense of humor. His interviews were tough but fair and you could always count on him to get the story right and to tell it humbly. I know our State's agriculture community will miss his agriculture reports. We will all miss hearing his voice on air.

Hugh never said goodbye at the end of an interview. He always said, "Keep smiling." We are smiling with him today as he celebrates his retirement. ●

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The following enrolled bill, previously signed by the Speaker of the House, was signed on today May 7, 2004, by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS):

S. 2315. An act to amend the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to extend the

deadline for the INTELSAT initial public offering.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2771. An act to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to reauthorize the New York City Watershed Protection Program.

H.R. 4227. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend to 2005 the alternative minimum tax relief available in 2003 and 2004 and to index such relief for inflation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANTORUM (for himself and Mr. BAYH):

S. 2394. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the expensing of environmental remediation costs; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 557

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income amounts received on account of claims based on certain unlawful discrimination and to allow income averaging for backpay and frontpay awards received on account of such claims, and for other purposes.

S. 2174

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2174, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to include podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the medicaid program.

S. 2302

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2302, a bill to improve access to physicians in medically underserved areas.

AMENDMENT NO. 3040

At the request of Mr. NICKLES, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3040 intended to be proposed to S. 1637, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to comply with the World Trade Organization rulings on the FSC/ETI benefit in a manner that preserves jobs and production activities in the United States, to reform and simplify the international taxation rules of the United States, and for other purposes.