

covered by Medicare. These services include specially-trained oncology nurses and supportive care services important to performing first rate cancer care. Although the new Medicare law increases reimbursements to physicians and provides much needed compensation for oncology nursing, it reduces how much Medicare will reimburse for chemotherapy beginning in 2005. While I support the sound and innovative advancements the Medicare law provides, it is important not to jeopardize cancer care through decreases in reimbursements.

Congress understood the impact the Medicare law would have on patient access and included a temporary one-year increase in physicians' practice expenses. However, this provision will expire in 2005 and could reduce access to care.

The "Ensuring Quality and Access to Cancer Care Act of 2004" would extend the one-year transitional period already established in the law for an additional year. It allows a compromise so Congress has the time it needs to further debate this issue, ask important questions regarding the impact of payment reductions and better understand how Medicare should reimburse for services provided to cancer patients.

U.S. COMMISSION ON OCEAN POLICY

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to again acknowledge the important work and contributions of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The Ocean Commission, consisting of 16 distinguished individuals, was established by the President pursuant to the Oceans Act of 2000, legislation I sponsored to bring special attention to the problems facing our oceans and coasts, and to lead to recommendations for a new national ocean policy. The Oceans Act directed the Ocean Commission to submit a report to Congress and the President of its findings and recommendations regarding national ocean policy. Exactly one month from now, the Ocean Commission will release its final report, which reflects the deliberations, findings, and comments generated by 15 public meetings, 17 site visits, 37 State Governors and over 700 stakeholders.

The last time an oceans report of this magnitude was issued was over thirty years ago. The report of the Stratton Commission led to the creation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and passage of landmark legislation protecting our fisheries and coasts. I have read the preliminary report of this Ocean Commission, and I can tell you it is very balanced and comprehensive. The final report, when it is issued, will no doubt influence ocean policy for years to come, and has already inspired oceans legislation which my colleagues and I have introduced in the House and Senate. I am also currently developing legislation

that will set out a national vision for ocean policy, conservation, research, and education, building upon the commission's recommendations.

Reports do not write themselves, and today I am taking a moment to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Admiral James Watkins, USN (Ret.), Chairman of the Ocean Commission, the Commissioners, and their staff. Admiral Watkins deserves to be commended for leading this monumental task and generating the attention it so wisely deserves. Dr. Tom Kitsos, as Executive Director, should also be recognized for bringing a well balanced report to completion. Each of the Commissioners should be applauded for lending their valuable expertise and a considerable amount of their own time to this task: Dr. Robert Ballard, Ted Beattie, Lillian Borrone, Dr. James Coleman, Ann D'Amato, Lawrence Dickerson, Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney, USN (Ret.), Marc Hershman, Paul Kelly, Christopher Koch, Dr. Frank Muller-Karger, Edward Rasmuson, Dr. Andrew Rosenberg, William Ruckelshaus, and Dr. Paul Sandifer.

I know Admiral Watkins, Dr. Kitsos and my colleagues share my appreciation of the commission staff, who wore many hats and put in countless hours to craft a fine report. The commissioners and Dr. Kitsos obtained invaluable advice and support from Terry Schaff and editorial expertise and advice from Morgan Gopnik. At the heart of the report were the staff who lent their considerable talents to developing the major themes in each of the working groups and in actually drafting the recommendations. Laura Cantral, Aimee David, and Gerhard Kuska contributed their expertise to the discussions on governance. The stewardship working group was ably assisted by Captain Malcolm Williams, USCG (Ret.), Brooks Bowen, Angela Corridore, and Frank Lockhart. Research, education, and marine operations issues were developed with the skilled support of Ken Turgeon, Captain George White, NOAA, Roxanne Nikolaus, and Chris Blackburn.

A report of this weight depends on careful execution of a public relations strategy. Kate Naughten, Peter Hill, and Michael Kearns are to be commended for their liaison work with the government and press. And we all know that every office would not function without a solid administrative support team. Lee Benner, Macy Moy, Polin Cohan, Sylvia Boone, Robyn Scrafford, Stacy Pickstock and Nekesha Hamilton are to be congratulated for managing the day-to-day operations of the commission.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone on the commission for a job well done.

ABUSE OF CONTRACT FUNDS IN IRAQ

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the alarming incidence of U.S. contract funds being

abused in Iraq. These violations range from the abandonment of vehicles, each worth \$85,000, to significant project overruns involving tens of millions of tax dollars. The scope of these wasteful and fraudulent activities is both disturbing and unacceptable.

At this critical juncture in Iraq's rehabilitation, contractors and their administrators should be providing contracted services and goods with maximum efficiency.

As an American, I am proud of and thankful of the men and women who have traveled to Iraq to help restore this country. They risk their lives and, sadly, some have given their lives. However, stories of outright waste and fraud involving contract funds are deeply disturbing.

Three themes have emerged from the abuse of U.S. contracts in Iraq: task order violations, the absence of cost controls, and inconsistent oversight.

Numerous contract officers have used existing procurement or task orders to obtain services and goods beyond the scope of approved contracts. For instance, during December 2003, the Army acquired interrogators for Iraqi prisons via a contract marked for the Department of Interior information technology purchases. Interior contract officers negotiated interrogation services through an open-ended agreement laden with tenuous connections to technology. In such circumstances, new procurement items should only be obtained under open and fair competition.

The absence of consistent cost controls has also attributed to the misuse of contract funds. The General Accounting Office reports that a significant portion of task orders, associated with defense logistical support contracts in Iraq, have been granted without concrete specifications, deadlines, and prices. The prevalence of open-ended contracts have fueled inefficiency and numerous project overruns exceeding 100 percent. Unfortunately, the absence of a well-trained procurement workforce in Iraq has impeded efforts to counter these adverse outcomes.

In the presence of fragmented oversight, the misuse of contract funds has further escalated. Currently, the Coalition Provisional Authority, CPA, only has oversight of contracts associated with reconstruction and Task Order 44 of the U.S. Army's Logistical Operations Civil Acquisition Program, LOGCAP, which provides CPA logistical support, yet all other contractors in Iraq are audited by agency inspector General, IG, offices. It is anticipated that the challenges of fostering accountability will substantially increase after the handover of Iraq on June 30, 2004. The CPA IG reports that 60 days after the handover, CPA audit activities will be merged into the State Department's IG Office. This office will oversee all U.S. contracts in Iraq including those managed by the Department of Defense. Government officials forecast that this change

in audit authority will generate confusion at a time when consistent oversight is most needed.

The widespread misuse of contract funds in Iraq warrants Senate attention. During these financially lean times, it is unacceptable to tolerate such outright abuse of U.S. tax dollars. It is imperative that we demand greater accountability and efficiency, and immediately focus on this critical issue. Senate hearings would help identify sources of misuse and assist in developing viable remedies. This war has cost hundreds of lives and billions of dollars. We should not ignore the price being paid, and the debt incurred, by this generation and future generations in this conflict.

UNSOLVED MURDER OF UKRAINIAN JOURNALIST HEORHIY GONGADZE

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, for nearly 4 years the case of murdered Ukrainian investigative journalist Heorhiy Gongadze has gone unsolved, despite repeated calls by the Helsinki Commission, the State Department, and the international community for a fair and impartial investigation into this case. As cochairman of the Helsinki Commission, I have met with Gongadze's widow and their young twin daughters. Besides the human tragedy of the case, the Gongadze murder is a case study of the Ukrainian authority's utter contempt for the rule of law.

Gongadze, who was editor of the Ukrainian Internet news publication *Ukrainska Pravda*, which was critical of high-level corruption in Ukraine, disappeared in September 2000. His headless body was found in November of that year. That same month, audio recordings by a former member of the presidential security services surfaced that included excerpts of earlier conversations between Ukrainian President Kuchma and other senior officials discussing the desirability of Gongadze's elimination.

Earlier this week, Ukraine's Prosecutor General's office announced that Ihor Honcharov, a high-ranking police officer who claimed to have information on how Ministry of Internal Affairs officials carried out orders to abduct Gongadze, died of "spinal trauma" while in police custody last year. This came on the heels of an article in the British newspaper, *The Independent*, which obtained leaked confidential documents from Ukraine indicating repeated obstruction into the Gongadze case at the highest levels. Furthermore, just yesterday, Ukraine's Prosecutor General announced that investigators are questioning a suspect who has allegedly admitted to killing Gongadze.

Many close observers of the Ukrainian authorities' mishandling, obfuscation and evasiveness surrounding this case from the outset are suspicious with respect to this announcement. Just one of numerous examples of the

Ukrainian authorities' obstruction of the case was the blocking of FBI experts from examining evidence gathered during the initial investigation in April 2002, after the Bureau had been invited by these authorities to advise and assist in the case and earlier had helped in identifying Gongadze's remains.

The Ukrainian parliament's committee investigating the murder has recommended criminal proceedings against President Kuchma. This committee's work has been thwarted at every turn over the course of the last several years by the top-ranking Ukrainian authorities.

A serious and credible investigation of this case is long overdue—one which brings to justice not only the perpetrators of this crime, but all those complicit in Gongadze's disappearance and murder, including President Kuchma.

Ukraine faces critically important presidential elections this October. Last month, I introduced a bipartisan resolution urging the Ukrainian Government to ensure a democratic, transparent and fair election process. Unfortunately, there have been serious problems in Ukraine's pre-election environment.

Ukraine can do much to demonstrate its commitment to democracy and the rule of law by conducting free and fair elections and fully and honestly investigating those who were behind the murder of Heorhiy Gongadze. The Ukrainian people deserve no less.

CHILD NUTRITION AND WIC REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2004

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak in support of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 as passed by the Senate. In the best tradition of the Senate, Members from both sides of the aisle have come together over the past year to renew and improve the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, WIC. I commend the chairman and ranking member of the Agriculture Committee, Senator COCHRAN and Senator HARKIN, as well as their staffs, for their hard work in support of the millions of children and families who rely on these vital programs to meet their daily food needs.

At the start of the 108th Congress, when we began the process of renewing the child nutrition programs, many of us had high hopes for improvements that might be made. I proposed legislation to provide financial incentives to schools that want to improve their nutritional environment, to renew Federal support for nutrition education in schools, and to expand and stabilize both the WIC and the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Programs. With my friend from Pennsylvania, Senator

SPECTER, I proposed the creation of a farm-to-cafeteria program that would bring fresh foods from local farms into the cafeteria, and with my friend from Indiana, Senator LUGAR, I proposed giving the Secretary of Agriculture greater authority over the sale of soft drinks and junk foods in schools. Other proposals were made to eliminate the reduced price category for school meals, thereby providing free lunches to all children living in families with income below 185 percent of poverty. Unfortunately, the tight budget with which we had to work did not enable us to enact all of these worthy ideas. I am pleased, however, that the bill before us does include many of them and that at the same time it substantially improves program access and integrity.

Working together, we were able to ensure access to the programs for needy children through direct certification, targeted verification, and technical assistance to reduce administrative error, rather than simply requiring across-the-board increased verification that would have potentially caused eligible children to be erroneously and unacceptably kicked off the program.

We have maintained the historic role of milk in our school meals program, while granting parents the flexibility to help their children get a nutritionally equivalent beverage with lunch if they cannot drink milk. This legislation will also allow schools to have more flexibility on what to serve on the school lunch line. While the school lunch program currently restricts schools to offering only milk varieties that most students chose in the previous school year, this legislation would allow schools to expand choices based on what they believe are the best offerings for the student body, including flavored milk, lactose-free milk and milk of varying fat levels. In particular, I welcome the addition of lactose-free milk to the school lunch line, believing it will expand milk's appeal to those with special dietary needs.

We are also taking an important first step in beginning to conquer the problem of soda in our schools. Twenty years ago children consumed more than twice as much milk as soda; now they drink twice as much soda as milk. This is a huge problem for our children. Thus I am pleased this bill gives schools the authority to offer milk at anytime and anywhere on school premises or at school events. This will prevent restrictions on milk sales that are sometimes inserted in soft drink vending contracts with schools.

This legislation ensures that small States will receive an inflationary increase in their administrative expense grant—the money that they receive to administer and ensure the integrity of the Federal child nutrition programs. This provision is particularly important to my home State of Vermont as well as to other small and rural States that have not seen an increase in their grant in over 20 years despite inflation