

awarded to the principal of high performing or significantly improved public schools to reward their good work. A reward is a powerful incentive to build on success and meet some of the areas which can make their school thrive. These grants could be for a specialized librarian, new books, and bonuses for excellent teachers, or even to support sports and recreation with a new basketball court. It is entirely up to the principal to decide. In addition, the bill includes \$5 million to support the very successful D.C. program to reconstitute the schools designated as in need of improvement by the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Transformation School Initiative has successfully breathed new life into 15 of the lowest performing public schools in the District with innovative ways to reinvigorate teachers, reinvest parents, and get kids excited about going to school and excited about learning. We are very pleased to support these programs with \$13 million for public schools as part of the \$40 million School Improvement Fund created last year.

The second prong of the School Improvement Fund, \$13 million for public charter school, is supported by robust support to strengthen the chartering system. With 41 charters granted to date, the District has achieved the distinction of having the highest number of charter schools per capita. As such, the District is in a position to serve as leader in the effort to use charter schools to spur system-wide improvement from within our system of public education. Senator DEWINE and I maintain our commitment to serve as a full and equal partner in this endeavor.

It is important to note that while the primary reason for the rapid growth in the number of charter schools was the unmet desire of education reformers to find a way to "step out of the box" that had become our public school system, charter schools are by definition independent public schools. With their relative autonomy, charter schools are a way to provide greater educational choice and innovation while not abandoning the public school system. Recent studies show that the existence of a charter school in a district not only increases the quality of education available to the students served directly by the charter school but in all surrounding public schools. In addition, charter schools provide a healthy dose of competition into the public school system and have the effect of accelerating reforms and improvements in traditional public schools.

Despite the increased challenge of educating students with the greatest need, objective surveys and reports show that the academic progress among charter schools students outpacing that of their cohorts in traditional public schools. Those successes included gains in reading and math performances; test scores higher than district, state and neighborhood schools; increased parental involve-

ment; and higher attendance and fewer disciplinary problems.

Strengthening charter schools, which were created in the D.C. by Congress in the 1995 School Reform Act, is a primary tenant of our work to improve education. Pursuant to Section 120 of P.L. 106-522, the Fiscal Year 2001 DC Appropriations Act, the local government is prohibited from amending the School Reform Act. Therefore, Congress has continued our oversight responsibility of the charter school law this year. The bill fortifies the environment where strong, accountable, academically excellent charter schools flourish.

This bill includes language which will encourage public schools to convert to charter schools. The 1996 School Reform Act allows for traditional public schools to petition to convert to a public charter school, if the teachers and parents in the community want a more responsive and engaging school. However, to date, only one school, Paul Junior High, has exercised that option. We are not trying to say that every public school should be a charter school, but we support if the community of a particular school sees a benefit in becoming a charter school and can gain a majority consensus of that community, a conversion is possible.

In addition, we toughen oversight of chartering boards to better screen applications and strengthen oversight of existing schools. We think this will make a stronger public charter school community, and should not create any additional bureaucracy which would tamp down reform. Finally, we included language which will improve access to facilities for charter schools, which can be their greatest challenge. The buildings in which children learn are just as critical as the other tools available to make these kids a success.

Under the kind leadership of Chairman DEWINE, we have also invested in the welfare of the most vulnerable children in the District, those in the custody of the abuse and neglect welfare system. Just in the last week, the District has suffered the loss of another child, Angel Fleming, who was put in the custody of the Child and Family Services Agency.

The bill supports our priority of reforming child welfare by providing the tools necessary to the foster care system with \$5 million. We are funding for early intervention services to try to keep kids with relatives, rather than send them to temporary foster care homes. The bill also continues to ensure that all kids in foster care get mental health assessments and services. Finally, Senator DEWINE has ensured that an area often forgotten, foster parents, receive the respite services necessary and promote grassroots foster parent recruiting and training efforts.

This bill meets our Federal responsibility to the criminal justice system and infrastructure investments requested by the mayor and council. The

new family court, which embraces the ideal of one family-one judge, is fully funded and we continue to provide for their new building. In addition, the bill initiates a new investment in the administration of justice in the District by contributing \$8 million to the construction of a new forensics lab. This laboratory will alleviate contract pressure D.C. imposes on other Federal agencies, such as the FBI, to complete local forensic work. The bill also contributes to security and emergency preparedness in the Nation's capital with \$22 million to bolster the police and first responders. In addition to all of the important initiatives in the District this bill invests in, there is \$13 million for cleaning up the Anacostia River and providing recreation for the entire region and \$5 million for transportation improvements.

I want to thank the mayor of the District, Anthony Williams, the entire council, particularly the Chair Linda Cropp, and the D.C. Delegate to Congress ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON for their many contributions and advice in developing this bill. They are great partners for Chairman DEWINE and I to ensure the bill meet the needs of the District. I appreciate the chairman's consideration and our ability to work together on this bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 4850), as amended, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The Chair appointed Mr. DEWINE, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. BROWNBAC, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. INOUE conferees on the part of the Senate.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2830

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that S. 2830 is at the desk. I ask its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2830) to amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to promote healthy marriages and responsible fatherhood, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for its second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar in accordance with rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be read the second time on the next legislative day.

RESPONDING TO CONDITIONS IN BURMA UNDER THE ILLEGITIMATE RULE OF THE STATE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 431 and the Senate

proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 431) expressing the sense of the Senate that the United Nations Security Council should immediately consider and take appropriate actions to respond to the growing threats posed by conditions in Burma under the illegitimate rule of the State Peace and Development Council.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 431) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 431

Whereas the National League for Democracy, headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, is the legitimately elected political leadership in Burma;

Whereas the ruling State Peace and Development Council, headed by General Than Shwe, and its affiliated organizations continue, through a variety of means, to violate the human rights and dignity of the people of Burma through murder, torture, rape, forced relocation, the employment of child soldiers, the use of forced labor, and the exploitation of child laborers;

Whereas the State Peace and Development Council has detained over 1,300 prisoners of conscience, including National League for Democracy leaders and supporters of democracy;

Whereas, under the repressive rule of the State Peace and Development Council, the situation in Burma poses an immediate and growing threat to the Southeast Asia region, including through the unchecked spread of HIV/AIDS, the illicit production of, and trafficking in, narcotics, trafficking in persons, and alleged efforts to purchase weapons from North Korea, China, and Russia;

Whereas, at the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly, a resolution was adopted by the General Assembly that expresses grave concern about the ongoing systematic violations of human rights inflicted upon the people of Burma and calls on the State Peace and Development Council to release all political prisoners, respect the results of the national elections in 1990, and restore democracy to Burma; and

Whereas the National League for Democracy has called upon the United Nations Security Council to intervene on behalf of the people of Burma: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the United Nations Security Council should immediately consider and take appropriate actions to respond to the growing threats posed to the Southeast Asia region by conditions in Burma under the illegitimate rule of the State Peace and Development Council, including the threats posed by widespread human rights violations, the unchecked spread of HIV/AIDS, the illicit production of, and trafficking in, narcotics, trafficking in persons, and alleged efforts by the State Peace and Development Council to purchase weapons from North Korea, China, and Russia.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE TO ESCORT HIS EXCELLENCY AYAD ALLAWI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the President of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort His Excellency Ayad Allawi, Prime Minister of the Interim Government of the Republic of Iraq, into the House Chamber for the joint meeting tomorrow.

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

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2823

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill for a second time by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2823) to provide for the adjustment of status of certain foreign agricultural workers, to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reform the H-2A worker program under that Act, to provide a stable, legal agricultural workforce, to extend basic legal protections and better working conditions to more workers, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I object to further proceedings on the measure at this time in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2004

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. on Thursday, September 23. I further ask unanimous consent that following the prayer and pledge the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate then begin a period of morning business for up to 30 minutes with the first 15 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the final 15 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, tomorrow morning there will be a joint meeting of Congress to receive a speech from Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq. We will convene following that speech for a short period of morning business.

Following morning business, we hope to consider the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. We have been working on an agreement and we hope to have that language worked out by tomorrow morning. We would like to finish that legislation and consider the family friendly tax bill when that conference report becomes available sometime tomorrow. Therefore, Senators can expect votes throughout the day.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the Foreign Operations bill, we are anxious and ready and willing to have an agreement. We think the bill can be resolved very quickly, and we want the RECORD to reflect our willingness to go to the bill tonight, tomorrow, anytime. We think it is very important that we get as many appropriations bills completed as possible. We are not in any way standing in the way of this. There is no objection on our side to going to this bill.

I also say that this Friday is the most holy of all holidays for those of the Jewish faith, Yom Kippur. We have a number of Senators who must travel west that day to prepare for the holiday. They cannot make their transportation arrangements unless they can leave here at 10:20 on Friday morning. The leader has spoken to some of the Jewish Members of the Senate and he recognizes the problem. We have this tax bill of which we know the importance. But we have to let the high holy day take precedence over what has to be done here on Friday.

I hope the two leaders and my distinguished friend on the floor now and the Republican leader will take that into consideration. It has been brought to my attention by several Senators this afternoon.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me say that there are Members on both sides of the aisle for whom Friday is an exceedingly important day. We are certainly aware of that. That is another good reason for finishing the family friendly tax bill tomorrow night. We will press on and try to complete both Foreign Operations and the family friendly tax bill tomorrow night.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:33 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 23, 2004, at 11 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate September 22, 2004:

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

PORTER J. GOSS, OF FLORIDA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.
THE ABOVE NOMINATION WAS APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE NOMINEE'S COMMITMENT TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY BEFORE ANY DULY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE.