

Kurds must explicitly commit themselves not to declare independence.

To enlist the support of Iraq's Sunni neighbors, we should commit to a new regional security structure that strengthens the security of the countries in the region and the wider community of nations. This requires a phased process including improved security assistance programs, joint exercises, and participation by countries both outside and within the Middle East.

Ambassador Khalilzad is doing a terrific job trying broker a better deal between the Iraqi parties. But he can't do it alone. The President should immediately appoint a high level envoy to maximize our diplomacy in Iraq and the region.

Showing Sunnis the benefits that await them if they continue to participate in the process of building Iraq can go a long way toward achieving stability. We should press these countries to set up a reconstruction fund specifically for the majority Sunni areas. It's time for them to deliver on their commitments to provide funds to Iraq. Even short-term improvements, like providing electricity and supplying diesel fuel—an offer that the Saudis have made but have yet to fulfill—can make a real difference.

We need to jump start our own lagging reconstruction efforts by providing the necessary civilian personnel to do the job, standing up civil-military reconstruction teams throughout the country, streamlining the disbursement of funds to the provinces so they can deliver services, expanding job creation programs, and strengthening the capacity of government ministries.

We must make it clear now that we do not want permanent military bases in Iraq, or a large combat force on Iraqi soil indefinitely. And as we withdraw our combat troops, we should be prepared to keep a substantially reduced level of American forces in Iraq, at the request of the Iraqi government, for the purpose of training their security forces. Some combat ready American troops will still be needed to safeguard the Americans engaged in that training, but they should be there to do that and to provide a back stop to Iraqi efforts, not to do the fighting for Iraqis.

Simultaneously, the President needs to put the training of Iraqi security forces on a six month wartime footing and ensure that the Iraqi government has the budget to deploy them. The Administration must stop using the requirement that troops be trained in-country as an excuse for refusing offers made by Egypt, Jordan, France and Germany to do more.

This week, long standing suspicions of Syrian complicity in destabilizing Lebanon were laid bare by the community of nations. And we know Syria has failed to take the aggressive steps necessary to stop former Baathists and foreign fighters from using its territory as a transit route into Iraq. The Administration must prod the new Iraqi government to ask for a multinational force to help protect Iraq's borders until a capable national army is formed. Such a force, if sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council, could attract participation by Iraq's neighbors and countries like India and would be a critical step in stemming the tide of insurgents and money into Iraq.

Finally, and without delay, we must fundamentally alter the deployment of American troops. While Special Operations must continue to pursue specific intelligence leads, the vast majority of our own troops should be in rear guard, garrisoned status for security backup. We do not need to send young Americans on search and destroy missions that invite alienation and deepen the risks they face. Iraqis should police Iraqis. Iraqis should search Iraqi homes. Iraqis should stand up for Iraq.

We will never be as safe as we should be if Iraq continues to distract us from the most important war we must win—the war on Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the terrorists that are resurfacing even in Afghanistan. These are the make or break months for Iraq. The President must take a new course, and hold Iraqis accountable. If the President still refuses, Congress must insist on a change in policy. If we do take these steps, there is no reason this difficult process can not be completed in 12-15 months. There is no reason Iraq cannot be sufficiently stable, no reason the majority of our combat troops can't soon be on their way home, and no reason we can't take on a new role in Iraq, as an ally not an occupier, training Iraqis to defend themselves. Only then will we have provided leadership equal to our soldiers' sacrifice—and that is what they deserve.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT MONTH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, this October marks the 60th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and gives us an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contributions that employees with disabilities have made to the American workforce.

The effort to help our fellow Americans understand these important contributions began in 1945, when Congress designated the first week in October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1962, the name was changed to include all employees with disabilities. And, in 1988, Congress expanded the designated week to a full month, and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a time to celebrate the progress we have made in opening the doors of opportunity for individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities—as all people—have unique abilities, talents, and aptitudes. And there is no question that our nation is better, fairer, and richer when we make full use of those gifts.

This July, our Nation celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act—the landmark civil rights law securing the rights of people with disabilities. As the chief sponsor of the ADA in Congress, I remember the day it was signed into law—June 26, 1990—as one of the proudest in my entire legislative career. And, just as many predicted, the ADA has taken its place among the great civil rights laws in our Nation's history. Today, the impact of the ADA is all around us, in countless facets of our daily lives.

Yet we still have much work to do to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Long-term employment, career advancement, and equal pay continue to be challenging for many workers with disabilities. Most importantly, we need to improve the employment rate of persons with disabilities. The gap between the employment rates of working-age people with and without disabilities was more than 40 percentage points in 2004.

There are many factors that contribute to this gap, including disincentives, transportation issues, and outdated stereotypes about people with disabilities. But the end result is unfortunate and unacceptable. Most people with disabilities want to work; they want to be self-supporting and independent. As a government and as a society, we need to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. We need to support creative job accommodations so we expand employment opportunities.

Misconceptions and apprehensions about hiring people with physical or mental disabilities continue to exist as a barrier to progress. We need to get out the truth, which is that most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations, while the cost for those who do is often minimal. Moreover, research amply shows that employees with disabilities have above-average records in attendance, job dependability, performance, and safety.

Breaking down these persistent attitudinal barriers requires a cooperative, sustained, and consistent effort. A new generation of young people with disabilities is growing up in America today—graduating from high school, going to college, and preparing to participate fully in the workplace. These young people have a right to make the most of their potential. Likewise, America must make the most of their intellect, talents, and abilities.

So this month, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of National Disability Employment Month, let us rededicate ourselves to breaking down the workplace barriers—physical and psychological—that continue to stand in the way of people with disabilities. Our goal must be to make the American dream accessible to all Americans.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BARBARA BERGER

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to honor a remarkable individual today on the occasion of her retirement from the U.S. Senate Recording Studio. Barbara Berger, or Barb, as she is known here in the Senate, is celebrating her last day of a career spanning 33 years. Barb has been here longer than any Senator save four. She has seen 320 Senators come and go from this body and served under 13 Sergeants-At-Arms. Not only has she seen many of us come and go, she has also witnessed the astounding technological transformation in media that has occurred in the past three decades. In 1972, when Barb began as a receptionist in the front office of the Recording Studio, radio and film were the only mediums of communication available to the Senate, and floor proceedings were not televised yet.

I haven't been here as long as some of my colleagues, but over the past 7 years, Barb has been the gracious smile and distinguished and professional face

of the Recording Studio. Her poise, civility and shining personality permeate the office and make working with them an absolute pleasure for me. Her institutional knowledge and memory and quiet authority provide me and all the staff and Members who work with the studio reassurance that our messages will be handled with care and expertise.

American historian Barbara Tuchman said:

Although I know we have already grown accustomed to less beauty, less elegance, less excellence, yet perversely I have confidence in the opposite of egalitarianism: in the competence and excellence of the best among us. The urge for the best is an element of humankind as inherent as the heartbeat. It may be crushed temporarily but it cannot be eliminated. We will always have pride in accomplishment, the charm of fine things . . . As long as people exist, some will always strive for the best. And some will attain it.

Barb epitomizes this competence and excellence in her work, and beauty in her kind and graceful spirit. My staff and I will most certainly miss her and I wish her well in retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF ANN S. SIMPSON

• Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Ann Simpson for her selection to receive the prestigious University of Wyoming Art Museum National Advisory Board President's Award on November 5, 2005.

John Paul Richter once said, "Art is not the bread, but the wine of life." In many ways this is true, but art not only enriches our quality of life, it also plays an instrumental role in human development. Art enhances cognitive skills and encourages creative expression. Art helps us understand different worldviews and perspectives. For these reasons and more, art must be fostered in our communities and across the Nation.

In line with this mission, the University of Wyoming Art Museum National Advisory Board established the President's Award in 1995. This special award is to be presented to an individual, group or organization for their lifetime commitment to the arts in Wyoming. Those selected must be an active advocate of the arts, be recognized as a patron of and major contributor to the arts, have played an instrumental role in the creation or development of a specific art program and/or art initiative, and embody a strong commitment to furthering/developing arts in Wyoming. Ann Simpson is an excellent choice to receive this distinguished award.

A Wyoming native, Ann is a long-time supporter of the arts throughout our State. In 1989, Ann received the Wyoming Arts Council Governor's Arts Award for her outstanding service to the arts in Wyoming. Her passion for

the arts is further illustrated by her work on the Ford's Theater Board, the University of Wyoming Art Museum Advisory Board, and significant financial contributions to art programs throughout the State and Nation. In fact, Ann worked with the Wyoming State legislature to secure a National Endowment for the Arts funding match of \$3.5 million in order to initiate construction of the Centennial Complex which currently houses the University of Wyoming Art Museum. She was also responsible for cultivating and stewarding a \$2.5 million donation to the University of Wyoming Art Museum, their largest endowment gift to date.

Ann has always recognized the importance of art and art education to our society. In fact, one of her most notable contributions to our State is an art outreach program called the Artmobile. The Artmobile is a traveling exhibition which visits communities throughout the State of Wyoming in order to provide our residents with exposure to diverse forms of visual art. The program incorporates artwork from the University of Wyoming's permanent collection and by Wyoming artists. Discussions of the exhibition are typically followed by hands-on art activities with the Artmobile curator. The program is provided free of charge and each presentation is tailored to engage its particular audience.

In 1995, the Artmobile was renamed for Ann in recognition of her tremendous efforts on behalf of the program. To this day, Ann works diligently to increase public awareness of the valuable service the "Ann Simpson Artmobile" provides and to enrich the lives of all Wyomingites with art. Ann Simpson is truly deserving of the University of Wyoming Art Museum National Advisory Board President's Award.

Mr. President, Ann's husband, former Senator Alan Simpson, and I grew up a stone's throw from one another, so I have had the pleasure of knowing the Simpsons for most of my life. Al and Ann are a remarkable couple with endless energy and enthusiasm for our great State. My wife Susan and I consider them both dear friends, and we extend our most sincere congratulations for Ann's extraordinary achievement.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 10 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 172. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for the regulation of all contact lenses as medical devices, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3945. Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "A Bill to facilitate recovery from the effects of Hurricane Katrina by providing greater flexibility for, and temporary waivers of certain requirements and fees imposed on, depository institutions, credit unions, and Federal regulatory agencies, and for other purposes"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, October 28, 2005, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 172. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for the regulation of all contact lenses as medical devices, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WARNER for the Committee on Armed Services.

Navy nomination of James D. Thompson to be Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with James F. Brinkman and ending with William L. Yarde, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 6, 2005.

Air Force nomination of Christopher Sartori to be Colonel.

Air Force nominations beginning with Suzanne M. Cecconi and ending with Kirk B. Stetson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 17, 2005.

Air Force nomination of Melissa A. Saragosa to be Major.

Army nomination of Deborah Whitmer to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Steven C. Henricks and ending with William J. Nelson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 17, 2005.

Army nominations beginning with Gary L. Gross and ending with Adger S. Turner,