

the Senate proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2419, the Energy and Water appropriations bill, with 1 hour of debate allocated as follows: 30 minutes equally divided between the bill managers, 15 minutes under the control of Senator MCCAIN, and 15 minutes under the control of Senator COBURN.

I further ask consent that following the use or yielding back of time the Senate proceed to a vote on adoption of the conference report, with no intervening action or debate.

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

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## EXECUTIVE SESSION

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### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on today's Executive Calendar: Calendar Nos. 399, 435, and 438; provided further that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of the nomination of Susan Schwab, PN 1032, and the Senate proceed to its consideration; provided further that the Committee on Agriculture be discharged from further consideration of the following nominations: James Andrew, PN 802; Charles Christopherson, PN 839.

I further ask unanimous consent the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

#### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs).

#### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Sue Ellen Wooldridge, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

George J. Opfer, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Susan C. Schwab, of Maryland, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

James M. Andrew, of Georgia, to be Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Department of Agriculture.

Charles R. Christopherson, Jr., of Texas, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Agriculture.

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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

### REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY PROTOCOL AMENDING THE CONVENTION WITH SWEDEN ON TAXES ON INCOME

Mr. FRIST. As in executive session, I ask unanimous consent the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on November 10, 2005, by the President of the United States: Protocol Amending the Convention with Sweden on Taxes on Income (Treaty Document 109-8).

I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read a first time; that it be referred with accompanying papers to the Committee on Foreign Relations in order to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

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

The message of the President is as follows:

#### *To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, a Protocol Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Sweden for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income signed at Washington on September 30, 2005 (the "Protocol"). Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocol.

The Protocol eliminates the withholding tax on certain cross-border dividend payments. The proposed Protocol is one of a few recent U.S. tax agreements to provide for the elimination of the withholding tax on dividends arising from certain direct investments. In addition, the Protocol also modernizes the Convention to bring it into closer conformity with current U.S. tax-treaty policy, including strengthening the treaty's provisions preventing so-called treaty shopping.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 10, 2005.

### EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING VETERANS DAY 2005

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 305, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 305) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Veterans Day 2005.

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

### VETERANS DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this Friday, November 11, is celebrated in this country as Veterans Day. It is always held on the 11th of November in memory of the end of World War I. In that "War to End All Wars" what wishful, optimistic thinking. All guns were laid down on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, at 11 o'clock a.m. on November 11, 1918. On that fateful hour, I am sure that many prayers of thanksgiving flew heavenward as Doughboys and their families rejoiced at their survival in spite of the most bitter and horrible fighting the world had yet experienced.

World War I saw the introduction of new and more deadly forms of warfare, as technology and chemistry were brought to bear on the battlefield. Horses were replaced by the first crude tanks and self-propelled guns. Monoplanes and biplanes brought warfare to the skies overhead for the first time.

Chemical weapons, terrible and deadly, clouded the trenches. Diseases stalked the fields as well, from trenchfoot to the deadly Spanish flu that killed combatants and civilians alike. It was a dreadful time, one that would surely erase the desire to battle, if only that desire could be wiped from the human genome.

In 2005, in wake of World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam conflict, the cold war and repeated conflicts in the Balkans, in Iraq, and in Afghanistan, World War I seems almost quaint. There was no threat of nuclear war bringing vast destruction to our homeland. There was no threat of terrorist attacks against innocent civilians. There was some respect for noncombatants, and there were no kidnappings or concentration camps.

Today's battlefield is amorphous. It touches humanitarian volunteers and journalists. It strikes at soldiers in their weary bivouacs, and it threatens to reach again into our everyday lives and travels. Our battle-stained soldiers get no rest.

This Veterans Day, we are at war on three fronts. First, let us never forget that we have troops in Afghanistan, still struggling to defeat the remnants of those who attacked us on September 11, 2001. They do not receive as much press coverage as the conflict in Iraq, but their fight is taking place in the heartland of the Taliban, the refuge of last resort for the mastermind of the 9/11 attack, Osama bin Laden. Our prayers go out to those brave men and women who labor in the deserts and the high, cold mountains of that embattled land. Your efforts and your sacrifices are not forgotten.

Second, we also have troops in Iraq, in a battle of our choosing. It is a battle that is consuming a high and bloody price on each difficult day. Our anxious prayers are with those men and women too, who must face each day not knowing what is around each corner or along each dangerous roadway. They may be sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that whatever we do

here to question or investigate the circumstances that led to their deployment to Iraq, they have our unwavering respect and support in addition to our prayers. Those of their comrades who have paid a dear price and who lie wounded in hospitals have our thanks and sincere wishes for a speedy recovery. To the families who have lost a loved one in battle in service to our Nation, we owe a great debt.

They have no Veterans Day prayer of thanksgiving, only the honored memory of their loved one.

Our third war is taking place at home, as the Nation struggles to put in place protections to deter, prevent, or respond to a terror attack within our borders. The military, the Department of Homeland Security, and State and local first responders all must define and organize themselves to meet these new threats. We are all familiar with the early responses, from machine-gun wielding National Guardsmen patrolling our airports to fighter jets circling overhead on combat air patrol. We now dutifully take our shoes off for inspection before boarding a plane, and we park farther from public buildings. We are reviewing what role the military should play in responding to terror attacks or natural disasters. We are debating what legal protections and due process are due to those who are accused of involvement in suspected terror plots. We are weighing what loss of privacy with regard to our electronic transactions, even our library book withdrawals and Web searches, is commensurate with the threat to our safety. These new threats have made significant changes in our way of life, to be sure. Thankfully, we have not been tested again so far.

The changes in our daily routines are minute, however, in comparison to the challenges facing our men and women in uniform. Their foes wear no uniforms, no recognizable insignia. They travel in crowds, in taxis and buses, in private cars and cement trucks loaded with explosives. They target diplomats, journalists, and those laboring to improve local living conditions as well as those in uniform. They target their own countrymen serving to keep the peace on their neighborhood streets. They come from other nations, driven by a fanaticism most of us cannot fathom, let alone comprehend. Our men and women in uniform are fighting the hardest kind of war against a chameleon foe hidden in plain sight among the passing crowd. They have made repeated trips to the battlefield as our overstretched forces must deploy and re-deploy. My heart goes out to them and my prayers are with them.

American men and women in the military services customarily state that they are proud to serve, proud to answer the Nation's call. Know that this Senator, too is proud—proud and thankful for the bravery and skill of our Nation's soldiers, sailors, and airmen. And I am proud of the families who support our troops with their love,

their care packages, their prayers, and their loving welcomes home.

On Veterans Day, the Nation pays its respects to the men and women who have served and are now serving our Nation in uniform, and who have faced or are facing our foes in battle. Give them your thanks, and give them their due. They are true patriots. They have faced great dangers for each and every one of us.

Mr. President, I close with a poem by Edgar Guest:

The things that make a soldier great and send him out to die,  
To face the flaming cannon's mouth nor ever question why,  
Are lilacs by a little porch, the row of tulips red,  
The peonies and pansies, too, the old petunia bed,  
The grass plot where his children play, the roses on the wall:  
'Tis these that make a soldier great.  
He's fighting for them all.  
'Tis not the pomp and pride of kings that make a soldier brave;  
'Tis not allegiance to the flag that over him may wave;  
For soldiers never fight so well on land or on the foam;  
As when behind the cause they see the little place called home.  
Endanger but that humble street whereon his children run,  
You make a soldier of the man who never bore a gun.  
What is it through the battle smoke the valiant soldier sees?  
The little garden far away, the budding apple trees,  
The little patch of ground back there, the children at their play,  
Perhaps a tiny mound behind the simple church of gray.  
The golden thread of courage isn't linked to castle dome;  
But to the spot, where'er it be—the humblest spot called home.  
And now the lilacs bud again and all is lovely there,  
And homesick soldiers far away know spring is in the air;  
The tulips come to bloom again, the grass once more is green,  
And every man can see the spot where all his joys have been.  
He sees his children smile at him, he hears the bugle call,  
And only death can stop him now—he's fighting for them all.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, we observe Veterans Day on an anniversary of a day when war ended and our Nation was again at peace. November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, has been a day we use to remember our debt to all who have worn the uniform of the United States.

Our veterans have borne the costs of America's wars and have sacrificed so that not only our Nation but also our world can be free from terror. Today, every veteran can be certain, the Nation you serve and the people you defend are grateful.

Today more than 25 million Americans are either veterans or retired military. This number includes men and women from World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Every Veteran has their own story of how they en-

tered military service. Many enlisted on December 8, 1941, or at the beginning of other conflicts. Some began their military careers at a service academy or with a letter from the U.S. government. Yet when their service is complete, veterans of every era, every background, every branch, have certain shared commitments and experiences that form bonds that will last a lifetime.

America's war veterans have fought for the security of this Nation and for the safety and peace of the world. They have humbled tyrants and defended the innocent and oppressed. The men and women of our Armed Forces have engaged the enemy on many fronts and confronted grave dangers to defend the safety of the American people. They serve and fight today, and their great achievements are added to American history. Americans are forever grateful for their honor, their courage, and their sacrifice.

Today and every day, the prayers of the American people are with those who wear our country's uniform. They follow a great tradition handed down to them by America's veterans. Our veterans from every era are the finest of citizens. We owe them the life we know today. They command the respect of the people, and they have our lasting gratitude.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, tomorrow the Nation will pause to honor those brave Americans who have so selflessly served our country in the Armed Forces. For more than 200 years, men and women have proudly worn the uniform of the United States. In peacetime and in wartime, these selfless individuals have served and sacrificed on our behalf, many of them far away from their homes and from their families. Too many of them have made the ultimate sacrifice, and too many others bear the permanent scars of war, both seen and unseen. We owe them—and their families—our deepest, heartfelt gratitude.

As we prepare to mark Veterans Day in the United States with appropriate ceremonies and recognitions such as those that will take place in big cities and small towns across my home State of Wisconsin, men and women from my State and across our country will be continuing to serve with honor and distinction on our behalf in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Their dedication to this great country—and that of those who served before them—should inspire us all.

These quiet heroes can be found in all of our communities—in our families, within our circles of friends and acquaintances, in our schools, at our places of worship, at the local barber shop or salon, and at various neighborhood gathering places. Many of our veterans, while intensely patriotic and proud of their service—to our country, decline to talk in detail about their own acts of courage. Such humility is a testament to the selfless nature of these individuals. It is also a reminder

of the sometimes painful burden that too many of our veterans carry as a result of their service—a burden that may include memories of wartime experiences that are too personal to share even with the closest of family members and friends.

These men and women show their pride in and dedication to their country in ways large and small, but do not call attention to their own heroism. Many of them continue to serve their fellow Americans and their fellow veterans through active membership in veterans service organization and other community groups. Others talk to school and youth groups about the importance of service, and many work tirelessly to keep alive the memories of those who did not return home.

Thousands of veterans around the country will gather proudly tomorrow for events marking Veterans Day. November 11 is a date with special significance in our history. On that day in 1918—at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month—World War I ended. In 1926, a joint resolution of Congress called on the President to issue a proclamation to encourage all Americans to mark this day by displaying the United States flag and by observing it with appropriate ceremonies.

In 1938, Armistice Day was designated as a legal holiday “to be dedicated to the cause of world peace” by an act of Congress. This annual recognition of the contributions and sacrifices of our Nation’s World War I veterans was renamed Veterans Day in 1954 so that we might also recognize the service and sacrifice of those who had fought in World War II and the veterans of all of America’s other wars.

We owe these brave men and women our gratitude, and we also owe them our best efforts to ensure they know about and receive the Federal benefits and services that they have earned through their service to our country. I have long been concerned that too many veterans and military personnel are unaware of benefits and programs that are available to them through the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense and a number of other Federal agencies. I will continue my work to ensure that all veterans know about the benefits for which they may be eligible. I will also continue to support efforts to fully fund VA health care programs so that all veterans who wish to take advantage of their health care benefits are able to do so. No veteran should have to wait months to see a doctor or should be told that he or she is barred from enrolling in the VA health care system because of a lack of funding.

In addition, I am committed to ensuring that our current military personnel receive adequate health care and transition services, including mental health services, as they return from deployments abroad and when they return to civilian life. I am pleased that earlier this week the Senate passed an

amendment that I offered to the fiscal year 2006 Defense authorization bill which is based on legislation I introduced in June, the Veterans Enhanced Transition Services Act, VETS Act. This amendment represents another step toward enhancing and strengthening transition services that are provided to our military personnel by making a number of improvements to the existing transition and post-deployment/pre-discharge health assessment programs.

My amendment will ensure that members of the National Guard and Reserve who have been on active duty continuously for at least 180 days are able to participate in transition programs and requires that additional information be included in these transition programs, such as details about employment and reemployment rights and a description of the health care and other benefits to which personnel may be entitled through the VA. The amendment also requires that demobilizing military personnel have access to follow-up care for physical or psychological conditions incurred as a result of their service. In addition, the amendment requires that assistance be provided to eligible military personnel to enroll in the VA health care system.

Mr. President, as we reflect upon the solemn meaning of this day, let us keep all of our veterans and their families in our thoughts. These men and women are examples of the best that our country has to offer, and they deserve our support—both during times of conflict and after the battles have ended and these valiant men and women have come home to their families and their communities. As we reflect upon the service of these courageous individuals on this Veterans Day, we should also redouble our commitment to continue to honor and support America’s brave veterans, military personnel, and their families on this day and throughout the year.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the veterans of our armed services. As combat operations continue in Iraq and Afghanistan, Veterans Day provides an important opportunity to honor those men and women who have made such great sacrifices for our Nation, both young and old.

Veterans Day is a time to reflect upon and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of all those who have served our country in uniform.

Veterans Day originated on November 11, 1918, as Armistice Day, commemorating the end of World War I. Although Veterans Day originally marked the end of a conflict, it now is an important reminder that our responsibility to veterans extends far beyond the close of hostilities.

First, I believe it is important that we pause and pay tribute to the approximately 160,000 troops still fighting in the regions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sadly, more than 2,000 soldiers have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Numerous

others have experienced serious injury and harm.

With thousands and thousands of veterans coming home from this war, we must prepare for their return and ensure that they receive the care and benefits they deserve.

Today, there are 24.5 million living veterans in the United States. And I am proud that California is home to the most veterans in the country—over 2.3 million.

As California’s senior Senator, I am honored to serve as the ranking member of the Military Construction and Veteran Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee.

In July of this year, the Senate approved a spending package that provides over \$70.7 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, over \$1 billion more than the administration’s request.

The appropriated funds contain \$23.3 billion for medical services, including nearly \$2 billion in emergency funding to address the fiscal year 2006 shortfall.

The Senate and House are currently in conference to reconcile differences between the two Chambers’ respective bills. It is my hope that we will finish conference on a final version of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill and send it to the President for his signature over the next several days.

In addition to medical services and research, the Senate bill also allocates \$104 million for extended care facilities for our veterans. With 9.5 million Veterans over the age of 65, the need for properly funded long-term care is more important than ever.

To date, a quarter of a million veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have been discharged from Active Duty.

Of these, 49,000 have sought care from the Veterans Administration. As a nation we must fully meet our responsibilities to the veterans of this country.

Advances in medicine have thankfully spared many veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan from death, but roadside explosives and other weapons have left many of our troops maimed and disabled. To better serve wounded veterans, the Senate recently allocated \$412 million for medical and prosthetics research.

There should not be any doubt that these brave men and women have given their all to protect freedom and our way of life.

It is estimated that 500,000 veterans spent all or part of this past year homeless. But tragically, the VA only has the capabilities to assist one-fifth of all homeless veterans.

We must continue to push for the development of an effective and expansive therapeutic housing program to help these thousands of veterans.

The new funding will bring us closer to guaranteeing the health, safety, and comfort of all veterans. The San Diego VA Medical Center alone will be able

to provide care for 2,000 additional patients.

It is also our responsibility to ensure that prescription drugs are affordable. We must also ensure that health care is accessible and that veterans' hospitals are provided with the proper tools and support they need.

This is why I have consistently voted for increased funding for VA health care. Just this year I supported an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act, which extends military health care benefits beyond retirement.

Noble sacrifices of past generations deserve to be remembered and cherished. Congress has consistently supported the construction of new cemeteries where the memories of our esteemed veterans can be honored and their legacies celebrated.

As a nation I believe we should also resist attempts to sell out land and facilities earmarked for veterans to commercial interests.

In west Los Angeles, pressure is increasing on the VA to develop some of the last open space left in the Los Angeles Basin. Land donated to honor the service of veterans should be kept in the hands of veterans. We cannot allow our responsibility to former servicemembers to be subordinated to economic interests.

To truly honor veterans, our country needs to preserve the memory of their courage. I worked with my colleagues from Iowa and California to make the battleship USS *Iowa* a permanent floating museum. The legendary ship's service in World War II and the Korean war will serve as a proper tribute to the veterans who served aboard this great fighting ship.

I look forward to continuing to work in service of our Nation's veterans. I hope you all will think of these courageous patriots beyond this special day and honor our veterans and the sacrifices they made in order for us to remain a free, self-governing people. To our veterans, I extend a heartfelt thank you for your service to our country. May God bless each of you and your families.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to honor our Nation's veterans. Nowhere is dedication to duty and love of country more evident than among those who have voluntarily chosen to serve our country. Today, America honors the sons and daughters who have helped preserve our freedom and left a lasting legacy of selfless service.

Since 1954, we have designated November 11 as Veterans Day to remember the brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces and defended our Nation. We also give our heartfelt gratitude to today's active service members and members of the National Guard and Reserve who are serving our country as we help to maintain peace and support democracy throughout the world.

I am especially proud to recognize Oregon's soldiers serving in our Armed

Forces, as they represent our State with honor and distinction across the country and throughout the world. Whether protecting Iraqi citizens in their historic effort to form a free and democratic state or helping evacuate victims of Hurricane Katrina in the gulf coast region, their continued commitment to our Nation inspires us all.

Throughout our proud history, the United States has courageously met the challenges posed by enemies of freedom. In the last 100 years, we have lost some 700,000 men and women in defense of our country. As we recall their noble sacrifices, it is also important to honor the relatives and loved ones who help shoulder the burden of service.

America now faces new challenges from enemies that did not exist when our Nation's veterans fought in previous wars. Those who fought tyranny and paid the ultimate price did so for an honorable and enduring cause. Generations of free and democratic people around the world join us in thanking the brave Americans who helped them achieve and protect their liberty.

Today, we honor the legacy of the fallen and the courage of our veterans and salute the values that have made the United States the greatest Nation in the world. I have the highest respect for those who serve, and I appreciate and honor all of the men and women who continue to defend freedom at home and abroad. These American heroes and their families are at the forefront of our thoughts and prayers on this special day.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, this weekend we will all return home to our States and march in parades and participate in memorial events. Personally, I am always humbled to meet with men and women who heard duty calling and answered without hesitation. When duty called for brave Americans to stand against the spread of tyranny and oppression—whatever its many forms—they answered. They were willing to go anywhere—from the shores of Normandy to the islands of the Pacific to the jungles of Southeast Asia, to Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf—they put their lives on the line for our safety and freedom. And in exchange for that, our Nation owes them sincere gratitude and a promise of support when they return.

During World War II, my father was a soldier and my mother worked in the War Department. During that time, my uncle Leandro was killed in Europe. My parents knew firsthand about the ultimate sacrifice to protect America. They taught me the fundamental values I hold dear—love of family, community, country and God.

My dad taught me something else. Four years ago, my father died at the age of 85. Even though his mind was wracked with Alzheimer's, my father's last wish was to be buried in his World War II uniform. My dad knew that there is no greater honor, in life or in death, than to love our country.

When I got to the Senate, I asked to serve on the Committee on Veterans'

Affairs. I wanted to fight for heroes like my father, uncle, brothers, and nephews. In fact, my brother John, himself a veteran and Congressman from Colorado's third district, will speak at Veterans Day events across his district tomorrow. Like millions of other veterans, whose actions matched their ideals, it is time the Nation acted to keep the promises it made to veterans.

Veterans Day is an opportunity for all of us to come together to hold parades and give speeches. Veterans all will hear from a number of politicians tomorrow.

It reminds me of something a young Ben Franklin wrote to his mother and father in 1738:

the scripture assures me that at the last day we shall not be examined by what we thought, but by what we did . . . that we did good to our fellow creatures.

John Kennedy put it another way:

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

Veterans Day is an important day, and veterans deserve every single word of praise that politicians utter. But our veterans deserve more than good speeches. They need the Government to keep the promises it made to them. We need to keep our promises to our soldiers at all stages of their lives, from when they first serve, to when they return home, to when they pass away.

Our military faces very different and daunting challenges as we begin the 21st century. We are fighting an enemy with a singular obsession—nothing less than the destruction of our way of life. We must provide our military with the resources to fight the war on terror and keep us safe. And just as we must protect our soldiers in battle, we must serve them when they return home.

Many of our veterans have seen and experienced things that will torment them for all of their days. Many return to us damaged physically and emotionally. Many will rise from the worst of it and work to help others to do the same.

Colorado has 433,000 veterans who have fought for our freedom, and our state has more than 13,000 soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to show these heroes that we will support them when they come home.

Earlier this year, I was alarmed when I learned the VA had a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall and was delaying construction and rearranging funds to hide the gap. I was proud to work with my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to pass \$3.5 billion in additional funds to cover the shortfall this year and next.

This is an important first step, but we need to make sure that veterans never have to worry about losing their health care again. First, we need to make sure that the VA's budget process works. I have worked with my colleagues to successfully launch a Government Accountability Office investigation into what went wrong at the

VA. I also authored legislation that passed the Senate to make sure that we are not surprised by this kind of news in the future.

Second, we need to ensure that the VA's budget is not dependent on the political whims inside Washington. I believe we need to make VA funding mandatory so that VA never has to ration care and veterans never have to worry about losing their coverage.

Colorado's veterans deserve a new state-of-the-art veterans hospital at Fitzsimons. When negotiations between the VA, the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, and the University of Colorado broke down, I was proud to step in and help restart negotiations. This remains one of my top priorities in the Senate, and I am optimistic about the hospital's prospects. Colorado's veterans will get a new VA medical center at Fitzsimons.

But veterans in the metro area are not the only ones who need better care. In many rural parts of Colorado, veterans are being forced to drive hundreds of miles to get basic health care at overutilized facilities. This distance can lead to delayed care. And in the case of our aging veterans, the trip can be damaging to their health. That is just unacceptable.

Across Colorado, many brave and dedicated State officials and veterans groups are providing transportation services to rural veterans. Such volunteer programs currently exist in Alamosa, Denver, La Plata, Moffat, Prowers, and Weld counties. These are successful, but financial uncertainties put them in jeopardy.

I am proud to have introduced the VetsRide Act to help programs like these survive. The bill provides small grants to groups that provide transportation or otherwise assist veterans in rural areas. This bill has earned the support of 17 Senate cosponsors including 8 Republicans. I hope to get this legislation approved so that we can continue these transportation programs that are a lifeline to our rural veterans.

In August, I hosted a field hearing on rural veterans issues in Grand Junction. Based on that hearing, I introduced legislation to require the VA to reevaluate outdated policies that disadvantage rural areas in the placement of new VA clinics. In September the Senate passed that legislation, which hopefully will help clear the way for the veterans of northwestern Colorado to get a clinic that they deserve.

In addition, I have introduced critical legislation to improve care for veterans living in rural areas, blinded veterans, and our elderly veterans. These are three areas where the VA is not doing enough, and a relatively small investment can make a major difference in our heroes' quality of life.

As we celebrate this Veterans Day, I am reminded of a sad fact. By 2015, the veteran population in Colorado is expected to fall by 49,500. Most of those will be World War II and Korean War

veterans who will take their rightful places of honor next to the heroes buried in the four veterans cemeteries spread across Colorado.

I believe we need to honor the men and women who sacrificed so much for our freedom by giving them a burial option close to their homes. Yet one of the Nation's largest veterans communities, Colorado Springs, does not have a veterans cemetery. There are more than 105,000 veterans in the Pikes Peak Region. Despite this, the nearest veterans cemetery is at Fort Logan, a 70-mile trip from Springs through heavy Denver traffic. I have cosponsored legislation that would fix this inequity and hope it will be passed by the Congress.

I have also cosponsored legislation this week to close a terrible loophole in the law that allows capital offenders to be buried at national cemeteries. Our veterans deserve the dignity of not being buried next to murderers and monsters.

Since the American Revolution, nearly 1.2 million American soldiers have died defending this country. Their valor is an example to us. It requires us, the living, to ensure that the country they fought for continues to be worthy of their sacrifice.

Colorado and the Nation will not forget what our veterans have done and continue to do for us. We owe veterans our gratitude and our lifelong support.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 305) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 305

Whereas tens of millions of Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States have been vital in maintaining our freedom and way of life;

Whereas the more than 700,000 brave Americans who have sacrificed their lives while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States have ensured that the Nation, which is founded on the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy, shall endure;

Whereas Armistice Day was first proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 to commemorate the November 11, 1918, armistice between the Allies and the Central Powers that ended the fighting of World War I;

Whereas on June 1, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law the Act proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day (Public Law 83-380);

Whereas on October 8, 1954, in anticipation of the first nationwide observance of Veterans Day, President Dwight D. Eisenhower

issued a Presidential proclamation regarding Veterans Day, which states, "[o]n that day let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain";

Whereas veterans play important roles in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas it is important to preserve the memory of the veterans of the Nation and to teach every generation about the sacrifices that all veterans have made in securing and preserving the freedom that all Americans enjoy today;

Whereas the United States is in a time of conflict that highlights the incommensurable sacrifices the brave men and women of our Armed Forces have made and continue to make for our Nation and its principles of freedom, justice, and democracy;

Whereas as of October 2005, there were 433,398 new veterans from the present conflict who bravely defended America;

Whereas November 11 is a day of solemn reflection on, and commemoration of, the contributions of those who have served and defended the Nation, especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms enjoyed by all citizens; and

Whereas it is proper that the Senate observe the day with appropriate tributes, commemorations, and reflection even when it conducts the Nation's business: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate—

(1) that those that have died in war serving the Nation, and the veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, living and dead, are to be honored for their contributions and sacrifices to preserve the Nation and the principles of freedom, justice, and democracy that all Americans hold dear;

(2) that Veterans Day 2005 should be commemorated with appropriate tributes to all veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States for their contributions and sacrifices, and most especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

(3) that all Americans are encouraged to join the Senate in honoring and paying tribute to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States on Veterans Day and throughout the year.

RECOGNIZING THAT VETERANS DAY IS A DAY TO HONOR ALL VETERANS OF THE ARMY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 306, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 306) recognizing that Veterans Day is a day to honor all veterans of the Army and to support the Army Freedom Team Salute's mission to recognize the unsung heroes who have served this country.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in