

his voicemail: "I can't take your call right now. With any luck, I'm out on the Island." It is due to that commitment that visitors to Assateague and other units of the National Park System will benefit from his labors for years to come. I want to extend my personal congratulations and thanks for his many years of hard work and dedication to the principal conservation mission of the National Park Service and join with his friends and coworkers in wishing him and his family well in the years to come.

It is my firm conviction that public service is one of the most honorable callings, one that demands the very best, most dedicated efforts of those who have the opportunity to serve their fellow citizens and country. Throughout his career, Mike Hill has exemplified a steadfast commitment to meeting his demand.●

COMMENDING SMOKEY HOLLER TREE FARM

● Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Earl, Betsy, Meg, and Buddy Deal of Smokey Holler Tree Farm in Laurel Springs, NC, for winning the National Christmas Tree Association's 2005 National Christmas Tree Contest. As Grand Champions, the Deal family has the distinguished honor of providing this year's official White House Christmas tree. This is a storied tradition that began in 1966, and I applaud the Deal family for producing North Carolina's ninth official White House Christmas tree. After winning at the State level, the Deal family's prized 18½-foot Fraser fir was selected out of 22 other entries at the national competition. The tree was then approved by White House Chief Usher Gary Walters and Grounds Foreman Mike Lawn to be the Blue Room Christmas tree. The Deal family will have the honor of presenting the prized Blue Room tree to First Lady Laura Bush in a special ceremony at the White House on November 28, 2005. As an added bonus, the Deal family will provide a tree for the Oval Office and another tree for the private residence at the White House.

This year's official White House Christmas tree is a fine example of the exceptional quality of Christmas trees that we have in North Carolina. North Carolina is one of the top producers of Christmas trees, providing roughly one out of every five Christmas trees in the United States, thereby contributing over \$100 million annually to North Carolina's economy. But this success does not come easily; it takes several years of meticulous care and attention to raise a Christmas tree. An average 7-foot tree is about 10 years old, and throughout that time the grower diligently shapes, grooms, and fertilizes the tree several times per year. Not many people realize the years of hard work and sacrifice that go into raising a Christmas tree, and our growers are to be commended for their continuous success.

North Carolina has a rich history in Christmas trees, and year after year, many American families enjoy the warmth and beauty of these North Carolina trees that are a symbol of the holiday season. I am proud of the hard work exhibited by our Christmas tree growers in North Carolina, and I am proud that there will be another North Carolina Christmas tree in the White House this year.●

GUIDEONE INSURANCE HONORED WITH "PRINCIPAL 10 BEST COMPANIES" AWARD

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, each year the Principal Financial Group shines a spotlight on companies across the United States that excel in providing for their employees' financial future, including a well-funded retirement. Selected by a blue-ribbon panel, these exemplary companies are honored with the Principal 10 Best Companies Award.

This year, 1 of the 10 recipients of this prestigious award is GuideOne Insurance of West Des Moines, IA. GuideOne, which was founded in 1947, is one of the Nation's largest insurers of churches. It also insures faith-based private schools and colleges as well as not-for-profit senior living communities.

At a time when so many companies across the United States are cutting back—or completely eliminating—their employer-provided retirement benefits, GuideOne is charting a different course. The firm's executives believe that providing for their employees' financial future is critical to success in recruiting, retaining, and motivating an excellent staff.

The 807 employees at GuideOne enjoy a generous benefit package, including a defined benefit pension plan; 100 percent employer-paid premiums for disability insurance; a 401(k) plan with 100 percent employer match up to 3 percent of pay; and health insurance that is 76 percent employer-paid for employees, and 68 percent employer-paid for dependents. Nearly 85 percent of employees participate in the company's 401(k) plan, which is remarkably high by national standards.

To its great credit, the company is also concerned about the health of its employees. GuideOne has a robust wellness program that, among other things, reimburses employees \$200 for fitness-related expenses.

Mr. President, it is clear to me that GuideOne understands what too many companies in the United States have forgotten. GuideOne understands that its employees truly are its greatest asset and competitive strength, and that a generous benefit package is the way to attract and retain outstanding talent, while keeping morale and productivity high.

So I congratulate GuideOne for the richly deserved honor of receiving the Principal 10 Best Companies Award, and I salute all the folks at GuideOne

for setting an example of enlightened corporate stewardship. They are proving that it is possible to do well and do good at the same time. And I couldn't be more proud that this excellent company calls Iowa home.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, 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 which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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

DRAFT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION ENTITLED "UNITED STATES-BAHRAIN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT"—PM 32

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents to implement the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (the "Agreement"). This Agreement enhances our bilateral relationship with a strategic friend and ally in the Middle East region and will promote economic growth and prosperity in both nations.

In negotiating this Agreement, my Administration was guided by the objectives set out in the Trade Act of 2002. The Agreement reflects my Administration's commitment to opening markets and expanding opportunities for American workers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses. The Agreement will open Bahrain's market for U.S. manufactured goods, agricultural products, and services. As soon as it enters into force, the Agreement will eliminate tariffs on all manufactured goods that the United States sells to Bahrain and immediately remove Bahrain's import duties on over 80 percent of U.S. agricultural products. The Agreement is also one of the most comprehensive ever negotiated to reduce barriers to trade in services and will create new opportunities for U.S. services firms.

The Agreement contains procedures that will facilitate cooperation between the United States and Bahrain on environmental and labor matters. The labor chapter of the Agreement reinforces Bahrain's recent legislative actions to expand democracy and improve the protection of worker rights,

including trade union rights. Provisions in the Agreement requiring effective enforcement of environmental laws will contribute to high levels of environmental protection.

The approval of this Agreement will be another significant step towards creating a Middle East Free Trade Area by 2013. This Agreement offers the United States yet another opportunity to encourage economic reform in a moderate Muslim nation as we have done through our free trade agreements with Jordan and Morocco. Leaders in Bahrain are supporting the pursuit of social and economic reforms in the region, encouraging foreign investment connected to broad-based development, and providing better protection for women and workers. It is strongly in our national interest to embrace and encourage these reforms, and passing this legislation is a crucial step toward that end.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 16, 2005.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 2:20 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Brandon, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1713. An act to make amendments to the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 related to International Space Station Payments, and for other purposes.

S. 1894. An act to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to provide for the making of foster care maintenance payments to private for-profit agencies.

The enrolled bills were signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

At 2:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 318. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Castle Nugent Farms located on St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

H.R. 323. An act to redesignate the Ellis Island Library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, as the "Bob Hope Memorial Library".

H.R. 326. An act to amend the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Act of 2000 to adjust the boundary of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance under that Act.

H.R. 856. An act to establish a Federal Youth Development Council to improve the administration and coordination of Federal programs serving youth, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1564. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain buildings and lands of the Yakima Project, Washington, to the Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District.

H.R. 1972. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of including in the National Park System certain sites in Williamson County, Tennessee, relating to the Battle of Franklin.

H.R. 3507. An act to transfer certain land in Riverside County, California, and San Diego County, California, from the Bureau of Land Management to the United States to be held in trust for the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3721. An act to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to allow certain commercial vehicles to continue to use Route 209 within Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and to allow the National Park Service to continue to collect fees from those vehicles, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3975. An act to ease the provision of services to individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3981. An act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out certain land exchanges involving small parcels of National Forest System land in the Tahoe National Forest in the State of California, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 288. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and reaffirming support for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so that all children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

At 6:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Brandon, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4326. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to enter into a contract for the nuclear refueling and complex overhaul of the U.S.S. Carl Vinson (CVN-70).

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 318. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Castle Nugent Farms located on St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 323. An act to redesignate the Ellis Island Library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, as the "Bob Hope Memorial Library"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 326. An act to amend the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Act of 2000 to adjust the boundary of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 856. An act to establish a Federal Youth Development Council to improve the administration and coordination of Federal programs serving youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 1564. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain buildings and lands of the Yakima Project, Washington, to the Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3507. An act to transfer certain land in Riverside County, California, and San Diego County, California, from the Bureau of Land Management to the United States to be held in trust for the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3721. An act to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to allow certain commercial vehicles to continue to use Route 209 within Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and to allow the National Park Service to continue to collect fees from those vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3975. An act to ease the provision of services to individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 3981. An act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out certain land exchanges involving small parcels of National Forest System land in the Tahoe National Forest in the State of California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The following concurrent resolution was read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 288. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and reaffirming support for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act so that all children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2008. A bill to improve cargo security, and for other purposes.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 1972. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of including in the National Park System certain sites in Williamson County, Tennessee, relating to the Battle of Franklin.

MEASURES HELD AT DESK

The following measure was discharged from committee, passed without amendment, and was ordered held at the desk, by unanimous consent:

S. 695. A bill to suspend temporarily new shipper bonding privileges.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4652. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office