

manner, but also increasing its capacity to produce electricity, these workers are doing their part to meet Missouri's—and our Nation's—growing energy needs.

I offer my personal thanks and congratulations for a job well done to all of the dedicated employees and the temporary workers who, as a result of exceptional preparation, teamwork, and execution, successfully completed the most complex outage at Callaway Nuclear Plant.

I congratulate the AmerenUE workers and their partners on their achievement. They have set a new standard of excellence in safety and performance and have helped advance the future of the nuclear power industry as a whole.

#### MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY'S RECENT TESTING SUCCESSES

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to comment on an event that may have understandably escaped the attention of my colleagues because our plate is full and the schedule is tight. I want to underscore the importance of what occurred on Tuesday night, December 13, shortly after 10 p.m. Washington time. It signaled a month of great achievement in our Nation's Missile Defense Program.

While many of us were turning on the late news that night, an operationally configured, ground-based interceptor missile, of the kind now emplaced in both Alaska and California, was launched out of its silo in the Marshall Islands and successfully completed all its major test objectives. It demonstrated smooth execution of the launch sequence, separation of the booster-kill vehicle, cryogenic cooling of the sensor, and positioning of the kill vehicle, among many other complex actions. For this test, there was a simulated target using data from previous launches. The interceptor successfully flew through its impact point, and had the target been real, it would have been destroyed.

This test was the latest in an extraordinary month. National attention had been focused on setbacks to our defense against long-range hostile ballistic missiles. However, this has been a month of successes for current and future elements of the Ballistic Missile Defense System that can provide a defense against both long-range and short-range threats. Perhaps these successes have flown under our radar screens, but now they deserve recognition.

In addition to this most recent test, there are at least three others that occurred in the past month worthy of note.

On November 17, an Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense SM-3 interceptor, launched by an operational crew from the USS *Lake Erie* off the coast of Hawaii, made a direct hit on an inert warhead that separated from a target missile 100 miles in space—a far more challenging scenario than previous tests.

This was the sixth successful intercept by a SM-3 in the last seven such tests since testing began in 2002. The successful intercept of a separating warhead advances our defense beyond simpler, unitary, Scud-like missiles.

Just as important was the return to flight of the terminal high altitude area defense, or THAAD, interceptor. After its last two successful flights in 1999, the program and the missile were completely overhauled to make it more reliable and easier to manufacture. On November 22, the revamped missile was launched from the White Sands Missile Range without a flaw. The test validated the interceptor's launch from canister, rocket booster operation, shroud and kill vehicle separation, and control system that guides it to the target for a kill.

And not least, just last week, on December 6, the Airborne Laser Program successfully completed a full duration lase at operational power. This involved linking the energy output of six large laser modules into a single beam, powerful enough to destroy a missile in its boost phase at the distances we need to shoot to kill. Now that the laser has successfully completed ground testing in a surrogate aircraft, it is being disassembled to load it onto its flight test Boeing 747 for further testing. The significance of achieving this milestone cannot be overemphasized—this is a revolutionary weapon with the potential to change fundamentally the ways in which we can protect our Nation, our troops, and our allies and friends from the growing ballistic missile threat.

These are the more visible Elements of the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System. What ties all these parts together is the Global Command, Control, Battle Management and Communications System, the brain and the nerves. It is less visible than radars and rockets, but our missile defenses couldn't work without it. The integration of far-flung parts, new and upgraded, often made at different times by different contractors, has been a great challenge, but it is one we are steadily and remarkably overcoming.

There have been many naysayers and doubters on missile defense. But I am proud to have supported the Missile Defense Agency over the past year as it has grappled in an intensive effort to track down and eliminate or minimize risks that have contributed to setbacks in the past. There is an emphasis on quality that is paying off, as witnessed by these last four successful tests. We learn from our mistakes, and we now bear the fruit of the combined efforts of a wide range of dedicated military, civilian, and contractor personnel. Testing will continue, we will encounter difficulties, but the program will move forward. We are succeeding in building an integrated and layered Ballistic Missile Defense System, our defenses will continue to improve, and our citizens will be increasingly protected and grateful.

#### RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, on April 28, 2005 of this year, just hours after the National Academy of Science released its report, I stood before this body and declared the importance of amending this law. On May 9, I introduced S. 977 which places Montana on equal ground with others who have suffered from nuclear testing fallout. Again, on May 10, I stood in this Chamber and talked about the importance of this legislation for the good people of Montana. Today, I am happy to be joined in my efforts by the Senator from Idaho, who introduced similar legislation for the people of Idaho. This bill is an important step forward in securing the justice that the people of Montana deserve. This bill combines my efforts with those of Senator CRAPO to extend RECA coverage to both Montana and Idaho in a single, simple bill.

Montana, more than any other State, was affected by the downwind radiation that came from the nuclear testing in Nevada during the 1950s. The statistics are eye-opening. Of the 25 counties in the United States with the highest exposure rates, 15 are in Montana. Meagher County in Montana has a rate of exposure greater than any other county in the United States. Fifty-five out of Montana's 56 counties experienced elevated levels of radiation exposure. And yet, Montana is the only State in the region that receives absolutely no compensation from the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act whatsoever.

The reported rate of thyroid cancer—which is the health affect most associated with the exposure to Iodine-131 from this testing—is 17.5 times the national rate. Between 1989 and 2003, while the national rate of thyroid cancer increased 38 percent, Montanans saw an increase of 127 percent.

When Congress passed RECA in 1990, it was an important step toward setting a grave injustice right. As a cancer survivor myself, I know that no amount of money can heal the wounds suffered by the victims of radiation exposure. Time and time again, I have heard from Montanans who tell me that it is not about the money. The people of Montana aren't coming to their Government with their hands out. They are demanding justice. They are demanding acknowledgement of their suffering. They are demanding that we do the right thing.

When RECA was passed in 1990, my colleagues did their best to do the right thing. For that, they should be commended. For the 9,117 Americans who have received compensation for downwind exposure since RECA became law in 1990, justice has been served. Responsibility has been taken, so that wounds can begin to heal.

And, it wasn't an easy journey. The first hearings for RECA were held way back in 1979, almost 30 years ago. The questions that needed to be asked took time to answer: Was there downwind

radiation? Were people exposed to that radiation? Were there health consequences to that exposure? And while the Senate struggled with these questions, Americans that were affected waited. As my colleagues expressed 20 years ago, time is not on our side in this matter, and all too often justice delayed is quite literally justice denied.

When Congress passed RECA in 1990, the extent of the damage done from this radiation was not fully understood. New studies, by the National Cancer Institute and the National Academy of Sciences, decades in the making, have shown that for many Americans, like those in Montana, justice has been denied. They live in the most affected regions of the country, and yet they find the door of justice closed to them by lines on a map. For some of these people, it is too late. The clock is ticking, and many have not survived long enough for their Government to do the right thing.

That is why I stand adamant that the time to act is now. We did the right thing in 1990. It is time to do the right thing today.

#### LABOR—HHS APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the fiscal year 2006 Labor, HHS, Education and related agencies conference report.

As my colleagues know, this is the second conference report to come out of the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee this year. This bill, which passed the House yesterday by two votes, represents a failure by the leadership of this Congress to adequately fund health, education, and workforce programs.

The first conference report—the one defeated by the House—contained drastic cuts to existing programs like the title VII health professions programs and No Child Left Behind.

So what is different between the bill before us today and the one that failed? Does the second conference report restore the harmful cuts to health and education that were supported by the Republican leadership in the House and Senate? Does the bill contain even one dollar more than the bill that was defeated by the House?

The answer to those questions is no.

The first conference report included \$201 million worth of cuts to rural health programs identified by the National Rural Health Association. The bill before us restores a few of these programs but it still retains \$137 million, or 68 percent, worth of those cuts.

The bill before us restores a provision costing \$90 million that would have prohibited Medicare and Medicaid from covering prescription drugs for erectile dysfunction.

And how does this bill pay for these provisions? It is not with new money but, rather, with \$120 million that was designated for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund for

pandemic flu preparedness and \$60 million that was supposed to go to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' administrative account for implementation of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit.

At a time when seniors are struggling to understand and sign up for the new Medicare drug benefit, this bill cuts the account needed to run Medicare's 1-800 help line, run its Website Medicare.gov, conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to millions confused seniors.

And at a time when public health experts across the globe are warning countries to act now to prepare for a pandemic influenza, this bill cuts \$120 million in pandemic flu preparedness funding.

In total, this bill cuts health funding by \$466 million.

That includes a cut of \$185 million for the Bureau of Health Professions title VII programs, making it harder to recruit and retain qualified health professionals, and the elimination of nine vital health programs including trauma care, rural emergency medical services, the geriatric education centers, health education training centers, and the health community access program.

In California, the elimination of the geriatric education program will eliminate funding for the Northern California Geriatric Education Center at the University of California San Francisco, the only source of Federal funding for geriatric education from the Bay Area to Oregon.

It provides a less than 1 percent increase in funding the National Institutes of Health, the smallest percentage increase to NIH since 1970. This bill cuts the number of new research grants that NIH can fund by 355, from 9,612 to 9,257.

Last September, 91 of my colleagues joined me in sending a letter to President Bush supporting the administration's goal of eliminating cancer death and suffering by 2015. The wholly inadequate funding for NIH in this bill dims the hope of reaching this 2015 goal.

The conference report harms all working American families.

First, the conference report slashes the Office of Disability Employment Policy to \$20 million, close to half of the funding in fiscal year 2005. The disabled community will no longer have the training, employment, and education needed to earn a decent wage. This is a community that already faces a 68 percent unemployment rate.

Second, reducing job training programs, dislocated worker assistance, and employment services by \$530 million will make it close to impossible for dislocated workers to re-enter the workforce. This is particularly appalling given the recent bankruptcy and layoff announcements by Delta, Northwest, and General Motors, just to name a few.

Lastly, the reduction in trade adjustment assistance will leave workers to fend for themselves when industries

change and jobs shift overseas. This is vital to the Nation's economic stability. The fast-moving pace of innovation requires that we have a flexible workforce provided with the training needed to transition to the next opportunity. Reducing this type of program will leave American workers behind.

The ability to work is the path to financial independence, economic stability, and the key to earning a better life. This conference report shamefully denies that opportunity to dislocated and disabled workers wanting to earn a better life.

And finally, this bill hurts our Nation's schools, educators, and students.

It cuts total Federal education funding by \$59 million for the first time in over a decade.

Within education, No Child Left Behind is significantly cut by \$779 million or 3 percent that will ultimately result in an estimated \$3 million loss for California schools.

Furthermore, this bill shortchanges the authorized funding level for No Child Left Behind programs by \$13.1 billion.

This major cut and underfunding is being done when the required math and reading performance levels under the law are increasing for school districts and schools are struggling to find the funds necessary to meet the law's requirements.

This bill also fails to provide any increase to the Pell grant student aid award of \$4,050 for the fourth year in a row, even though a \$100 increase was promised in the budget resolution.

Federal Pell grants are the cornerstone of our need-based financial aid system ensuring that all students have access to higher education.

Pell grants help over 5.3 million low- and middle-income students attend college, over 500,000 of them in California.

There could not be a worse time for freezing student's financial grant aid as the costs of attending a 4-year public college or private college have dramatically increased both nationwide and in California.

According to the College Board, the average cost nationwide of attending a public university for 1 year has increased 66 percent to \$5,132 within the last 10 years, and yet Pell grant aid continues to remain stagnant.

This bill also drastically cuts other important education programs, such as Even Start literacy programs that help disadvantaged children and their parents increase their English skills are cut by 56 percent, from \$200 million to \$100 million; education technology State grants are cut by 45 percent, from \$496 million to \$275 million; and State grants for keeping schools safe and drug free are cut by 20 percent, from \$437 million to \$350 million.

The bill before us shortchanges American families, and I believe America can do better. The cuts in this bill for vital health, education, and workforce programs are a direct result of the agenda of this administration and