

Also, during his career, he served as a chaplain at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas and St. Alban's Naval Hospital, and he is now a chaplain for the New Jersey State police.

I have a personal message for Rabbi Orenstein, and that is, as he contemplates retirement—I speak as one who knows; I tried retirement, and I did not like it. I am not recommending anything differently for you, but I know with your active mind and your social conscience you are going to be doing lots of things that continue to benefit the community, and I expect you will be spending a lot of time with your six grandchildren. We wish all of you well.

The rabbi's daughter Debra is also a rabbi, and she serves at a synagogue in Los Angeles. She has authored a book on Jewish rituals for women. Rabbi Orenstein is justifiably proud of his family, his daughter, and his other two children, one of whom is a professor at the Law School of Indiana, and his son Raphael, who is soon to be a doctor.

I know the 575 families at Congregation Beth El will miss Rabbi Orenstein. I make the plea here: Do not take this retirement too seriously. Stay active; be available to the community. We wish you well. It has been my honor and pleasure to know you well for so many years. I look forward to our contact continuing.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey, Mr. CORZINE, is recognized.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, it is also my honor to bestow my congratulations on Rabbi Orenstein for his 35 years of service to Congregation Beth El and a lifetime of service to community and mankind.

His words this morning about love and our responsibility to our communities and attention, which is demonstrated both by his family and the Congregation Beth El, are testimony to a human being who has a heart that reflects that love in his everyday life.

Senator LAUTENBERG has gone through his resume, but the real issue of a man's life is what he has done for others, and no one has contributed more to his community or reached out to lift up his fellow man than Rabbi Orenstein.

I am honored that he was able to open this morning's session, but I am also honored to have him as a friend. Thank you very much for being here.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 min-

utes, with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will speak on leader time.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLIO VACCINE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the polio vaccine. On April 12, 1955, Americans across the country cheered the news that Dr. Jonas Salk and his team of researchers had developed a vaccine that was "safe, effective, and potent." One of mankind's most ancient enemies going as far back as ancient Egypt would finally be vanquished. It was truly a watershed in American history, launching an era of unprecedented vaccine development.

Today, vaccines protect children from more than 12 vaccine-preventable diseases, reducing disease rates by as much as 99 percent in the United States.

It is hard for today's generation to imagine the fear and the panic that gripped the Nation every summer in the first decades of the 20th century. Everyone was at risk—young and old, rich and poor. At the first signs of illness, swimming pools were closed and drained, movie theaters were padlocked shut, mothers cloistered their children for the duration, as everyone waited for that anxious cloud to pass.

Some polio victims died. Others were debilitated for life. The 1916 polio epidemic alone killed 6,000 Americans and paralyzed another 27,000.

Polio's most famous victim was, of course, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who contracted the virus at the age of 39 while on vacation. As America would later learn, the disease permanently paralyzed the future President.

Even now, half of the 1 million polio survivors today suffer residual bouts of illness. Deborah Cunningham of Nashville, TN, recalls her childhood struggle with the vicious disease. It was 1951. She was only 6 years old. She had just begun the first grade when one morning she woke up with a severe headache. As she tried to walk across her bedroom to get dressed for school, she collapsed on the floor.

Her parents rushed her to the local hospital where doctors examined her. They asked her to try to lift her legs. As she told a newspaper, the Commercial Appeal: "I didn't know why they gave me such funny looks."

She thought she had done as they said but, in fact, neither of her legs moved an inch. Deborah spent the next month in isolation, unable to speak or to eat solid foods. She was then moved to a ward for children with polio for 8 months where she spent the first 3 months encased in an iron lung.

In 1946, there were 25,000 cases of polio across the country. By 1952, the

annual tally had more than doubled to 58,000 new cases. Until Jonas Salk's historic breakthrough, polio was one of the most dread diseases in the world. Indeed, the development of the polio vaccine has been compared to the Moon landing.

Today, polio has been nearly eradicated from the globe. Worldwide, only six countries are still significantly afflicted. In 1988, there were 350,000 cases worldwide. In 2003, that number was down to only 784 new cases. The World Health Organization is confident they will eradicate polio from the face of the globe by the end of the year.

One gentleman who has been instrumental in the drive to eliminate polio is Tennessee's own William Sergeant, chairman of the International PolioPlus Committee. The 86-year-old has dedicated over 40 years fighting the spread of the disease. In 1998, he was the first recipient of the Hannah Neil World of Children Award.

Today, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History will celebrate the vaccine's 50th anniversary. Dr. Salk's youngest son and FDR's granddaughter will be in attendance.

Together they will help launch the Smithsonian's monthlong exhibition on the rise and fall of polio and the heroic efforts of Dr. Salk, and people such as Mr. Sergeant who worked tirelessly to defeat the disease.

As we celebrate polio's final retreat from human history, we must be ever vigilant and aware of the new threats that are taking place today. HIV/AIDS, SARS, West Nile virus, avian flu, and most recently the Marburg virus are among the emerging dangers in the 21st century. Currently, Angola is suffering the most severe Marburg outbreak in recorded history. As of yesterday, the virus has killed 193 victims in 1 month.

Marburg, which is a variant, a cousin, of the Ebola virus, is spread by bodily fluids, by things as small as little beads of sweat. Nine out of 10 people who contract the disease die typically within a week. The virus has an incubation of 5 to 10 days. The victim then suffers a sudden onset of fever, chills, and muscle aches. These symptoms quickly escalate to nausea, vomiting, chest tightness, and abdominal pain, ultimately leading to organ failure and death. There is no cure and there is no effective vaccine.

Scientists do not know the source of the virus or how it is initially transmitted into the human population. It is one plane ride away from the United States of America. There is no cure and there is no vaccine. At this very moment, international health workers in Angola are working feverishly to contain its spread. The epidemic is expected to last up to 3 months.

Meanwhile, there is avian flu. We continue to receive disturbing reports on the avian flu outbreaks in Asia. Already 50 people have died. Experts warn that the virus may mutate into a more lethal and more transmissible form,

potentially unleashing a worldwide flu epidemic. If we do not address this threat now, tens of millions of people could die as a result, and we are dangerously behind.

The flu vaccine shortage last winter underscores the fragility of our vaccine supply in this country and indeed around the world. It underscores our need to bolster Federal and State preparedness whether in the event of a bioterror attack or emerging infectious disease. We have had this discussion before. We need to take action.

There are now only five major vaccine manufacturers worldwide that have production facilities in the United States. That is for all vaccines. Only two are U.S. companies. Over the past 2 decades, the number of manufacturers that made vaccines for children has dwindled from 12 now down to 4. Only two of the four manufacturers that make lifesaving vaccines for children are in the United States of America.

Early this year, Republican leadership unveiled the Protecting America in the War on Terror Act of 2005. This legislation contains critical new provisions to strengthen our public health infrastructure, stabilize the vaccine industry, and encourage advanced research and development. It encourages the development of countermeasures against a biological, radiological, or nuclear attack as well as emerging infectious diseases. It does not address routine childhood immunizations.

This legislation incorporates recommendations from top health officials, industry experts, and infectious disease specialists. I urge my colleagues to support these long overdue measures to keep America safe.

I am gratified by my colleagues' efforts in the House to press this public safety issue. Indeed, in a few minutes the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies is holding a hearing on pandemic preparedness and influenza vaccine supply. Officials from the CDC, NAID, and the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services will offer testimony this morning on the status of our public health security.

We cannot afford to be complacent. Experts tell us that the emergence of the worldwide flu pandemic is not a mere possibility but an all too frightening probability. Millions of lives could be lost if we fail to act. We must continue to search for preventions and cures to the new diseases on the horizon.

Most recently, thanks to the success of U.S. immunization efforts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that rubella is no longer a major health threat in the United States. However, Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the CDC, stresses:

We have to remain vigilant because, as we say in public health, our network is only as strong as the weakest link . . . [We] have to sustain our commitment to immunization. We have to strengthen all of the links in the

network, and we have to do everything possible to protect the health of children here within our country, as well as beyond.

We have come a long way since the famed Ernest William Goodpasture helped pioneer the development of vaccines. His work at Vanderbilt University helped create the vaccines that protect us from chickenpox, smallpox, yellow fever, typhus, Rocky Mountain fever, and many other viral diseases. I am confident that we possess the ingenuity. America has been the engine of countless lifesaving discoveries and global health efforts. Now it is time for us to demonstrate our resolve once again for the safety of our fellow citizens and millions of people around the globe.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we have been joined this morning by the Senator from Colorado, and I yield to him such time as he may consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

JUDICIAL CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I thank the great and wonderful Senator from Delaware for yielding me the time.

I rise to speak briefly about the bipartisan action taken by the Senate yesterday when it confirmed the nomination of Paul Crotty to be U.S. district judge for the southern district of New York.

I commend my colleagues for their willingness to put aside their partisan differences and to make sure that the judicial confirmation process worked in the case of Judge Crotty. I commend them for acting so obviously for the good of the American people.

Even more importantly, it is my hope that this example will prove to be an enduring one for all of us as we move forward with the subject of judicial nominations in the future. Our duty to evaluate Presidential judicial nominations and to confirm or reject nominees is a particularly solemn obligation under our Constitution. Our 871 article III Federal judges hold positions of great respect and great power. They put criminals in jail. They decide our most important private disputes and they explain what our laws mean. Our constitutional duty to evaluate judicial nominees is doubly important because judges are appointed for life. If we make a mistake, our country is stuck with a bad judge for years and sometimes decades.

On March 1, 2005, I sent a letter to President George Bush concerning judicial nominations. I respectfully suggested to the President that there are many well-qualified candidates to serve on the Federal bench, men and women who unquestionably would gain

the consensus and approval of this body. The fact that the Senate reached consensus on 205 of the President's 215 judicial nominations over the past 4 years demonstrates the willingness, indeed the strong desire, of the majority and minority in the Senate to achieve this consensus.

Let me repeat that statistic one more time: 205 of the 215 nominations of President Bush have been confirmed by this body. That is a 95-percent confirmation approval rating. When there is that kind of approval of the President's nominees, this body is doing its job and not being, as some people have suggested, an obstructionist body.

Judge Crotty is an example of the way judicial nominations should be pursued in order to be successful under our Constitution. His nomination resulted first from consultations and then from an agreement among Senator SCHUMER, Governor Pataki of New York, and the White House. That kind of collaborative consensus approach to making sure there are no problems with the confirmation of judges who are nominated by the White House is exactly what ought to be pursued in other judicial vacancies that occur in our country.

Partisanship in this particular appointment played no role whatsoever, and it should play no role. Judge Crotty was a consensus choice, a nominee without extreme ideologies or any troubling factors in his background. Judge Crotty's qualifications to sit in judgment of others were apparent to all Senators, Democrats and Republicans alike.

Our duty runs to all the people of our Nation, whether they are Republicans, Democrats, Independents, or something else. At the end of the day, I plead with my colleagues in this Chamber, which has been so much a part of our constitutional history, to avoid moving forward with the so-called nuclear option that has the potential of shutting down the work of this body on behalf of the people of the United States.

At the end of the day, I suggest to the President of the United States and to our leadership in this body that there are issues which are of much greater importance for all of us to work on on behalf of the people. The people's work should be about having a national and homeland security program that works to protect our homeland and protect our Nation. The people's business should be about making sure that we pass energy legislation that addresses our overdependence on foreign oil today. The people's business should be about how we deal with the problem of health care which is strangling so many Americans and so many businesses across our country.

There are so many issues that are important to take care of the people's business that we ought not allow ourselves to get into the distracting avenue of dealing with the controversial issue of the few judges who historically have been rejected by the Senate. I