

half the wait time for an appointment. These important accomplishments have improved the healthcare for our service men and women.

Secretary Principi also understood the importance of further investigating the causes of Gulf War Illness. He kept his promise to attend a meeting in Texas with Dr. Robert Haley, a world renowned researcher on the issue of Gulf War Illness. After meeting with Dr. Haley, Secretary Principi recognized the need for a study on this illness, which ultimately led to the dedication of \$60 million over the next 4 years for research. We cannot thank him enough for his leadership and attention to this important issue.

I thank Secretary Principi for his tireless service to the veterans of Texas and throughout the United States. He and his work will not be forgotten by a grateful Nation.

#### COMMON SENSE REGULATION OF FIFTY CALIBER SNIPER RIFLES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the CBS news program "60 Minutes" recently aired a segment regarding the dangers that .50 caliber sniper rifles pose to the security of our Nation. In previous Congresses, I have cosponsored legislation to enact common sense regulation of these dangerous weapons. Unfortunately, the Congress has thus far failed to act. I am hopeful that the 109th Congress will address this issue for the safety of all Americans.

The .50 caliber sniper rifle is a favorite weapon of militaries around the world and is also among the most powerful weapons legally available to private individuals in the United States. According to a report released by the Violence Policy Center last year, a .50 caliber sniper rifle is capable of accurately hitting a target over 1,500 yards away, and the ammunition available for the rifle includes armor-piercing, incendiary, and explosive bullets. The report also cites the U.S. Army's manual on urban combat, which states that .50 caliber sniper rifles are designed to attack bulk fuel tanks and other high-value targets from a distance using "their ability to break through all but the thickest shielding material."

The previously mentioned "60 Minutes" program highlighted various threats that military style .50 caliber sniper rifles pose to civilians. One serious threat reported on the program is the vulnerability of commercial aircraft to terrorists with .50 caliber sniper rifles. This threat was previously addressed in a 1999 report by the minority staff of the House Government Reform Committee, which noted that the thumb-sized bullets fired by .50 caliber rifles can easily punch through aircraft fuselages, fuel tanks, and engines. Police Commissioner Ray Kelly of New York City referred to these potential threats by saying, "Clearly, with the range that it has, and the impact capability that it has, it would put an airliner or an airplane at risk if it hit that plane."

So the easy availability of the .50 caliber sniper rifle poses a danger to airline safety, as well as our overall security. Last September, California became the first and so far only State in the country to ban the manufacture, sale, distribution, or importation of .50 caliber sniper rifles. Unfortunately, there are few Federal regulations to protect the rest of the Nation from these dangerous weapons. Buyers need only be 18 years old, rather than the 21 years of age required for handgun purchases. And there is no minimum age requirement for possession of a .50 caliber weapon and no regulation on second hand sales.

In an interview which became part of the "60 minutes" report, the inventor and current manufacturer of the .50 caliber sniper rifle, Ronnie Barrett, described his product as "a high-end adult recreational toy." When asked how he came up with the idea for the rifle, Mr. Barrett replied, "I was just a 26 year-old kid, and didn't know any better."

Mr. President, we should know better. The time has come to classify these weapons in the same common sense manner that we classify other weapons of war, including machine guns. The 109th Congress should follow California's good example and pass reasonable legislation that changes the way .50 caliber guns are regulated.

#### GLOBAL TSUNAMI DETECTION SYSTEM

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to comment today on S. 50, the Tsunami Preparedness Act of 2005, a timely and much-needed bill in the aftermath of the devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean. The world has learned valuable lessons in the past month about human suffering and loss, as well as generosity and good fortune in the face of impossible odds. We have also learned a great deal about the generation of tsunamis, the need to instrument the ocean, and the need to assist in the development of a warning and civil defense system for vulnerable nations around the world.

I joined my colleagues Senators DAN INOUE and TED SEVENS, the ranking member and chair, respectively, of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, as an original cosponsor of S. 50, the Tsunami Preparedness Act of 2005, which was introduced on Monday, January 24, 2005. The bill would authorize, expand, and improve our domestic tsunami warning system. Equally importantly, it would authorize the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, to provide technical assistance and advice to appropriate international entities in developing a global tsunami warning system comprised of regional warning networks, modeled on the Tsunami Warning System of the Pacific. We must share our expertise and experience with other tsunami-prone nations around the world.

My conviction is based on personal experience. In Hawaii, tsunamis have accounted for more lost lives than all other natural disasters. In the 20th century, an estimated 221 people were killed by tsunamis. Most of these deaths occurred on the island of Hawaii during the tsunamis of 1946 and 1960, two of the largest tsunamis to strike in the Pacific. I am hopeful that our experiences in Hawaii and the expertise of NOAA's two National Weather Service Tsunami Warning Centers located in Palmer, AK, and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Ewa Beach, HA, can help other nations around the world prepare for potential undersea earthquakes that result in these tragic disasters.

One of the worst natural disasters in Hawaii's history took place April 1, 1946 when a magnitude 7.1 earthquake in the Aleutian Islands triggered a destructive, Pacific-wide tsunami that killed 159 people: 96 in Hilo, 15 on Kauai, 14 on Maui and nine on Oahu. There was no warning in Hawaii, as the Tsunami Warning System had not been established at that time. The town of Hilo was "pounded" by a series of 6 to 7 waves, one after the other. The waterfront and all the buildings facing Hilo Bay were completely destroyed. The tsunami flooded the downtown area of Hilo causing more than \$26 million in damages. The photos that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took afterwards showed scenes similar to the ones we've seen in the past month in Thailand and Indonesia—everything was leveled and destroyed. The character of downtown Hilo was changed forever. Tragically, we lost a number of young children, students, killed by the tsunami in Laupahoehoe, a small community north and west of Hilo where the waves struck the school and destroyed a hospital. As a result, in 1949 the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center was established, which later became the headquarters of the International Pacific Warning System.

This bill would authorize several programs in NOAA that we have depended on since 1949. It would deploy a greater number of buoys throughout the Pacific and it would expand the research on tsunamis and their detection to ensure a more reliable and better instrumented system for the Pacific, including Alaska, the West Coast of the U.S. and Pacific islands nations who are members of the group. It would expand the domestic system to the Atlantic and Caribbean where tsunamis are infrequent but not impossible.

I would like to close with an appeal to my colleagues to consider the types of aid that the U.S. can provide to Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, and Thailand. We must not overlook the science and technology of tsunamis and tsunami detection. The detection, warnings, planning, and public education are perhaps the most important types of assistance we can provide, because they are preventive and represent the little that we can do to save lives in dealing

with the forces of nature in the future. They are an investment in the future safety and security of humankind.

This bill, most importantly, would mandate the U.S. to share its expertise and experience in the Pacific with those nations that have suffered such devastating losses from the Indian Ocean tsunami. With the technology we have, no family of nations need suffer in the future from such widespread devastation without warning and public awareness of what tsunamis are, what they can do, and how to react and plan for them. Hawaii and the Pacific has been well-prepared for tsunamis through 20 years of State and federal efforts through the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, which is a NOAA Federal-State partnership with or Hawaii Civil Defense program. This program has enhanced Hawaii's tsunami mitigation and preparedness programs. Sharing our experience, our successes, and our learning curves is a very important part of assistance in the aftermath of the tsunami.

I urge support for this bill and commend my colleagues on the Commerce Committee, and its staff, for their foresight in addressing this issue and working with the executive branch to review and comment on this bill.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR S. CON.  
RES. 4

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, on January 25, I submitted S. Con. Res. 4, and I ask unanimous consent that the letter dated November 19, by Secretary Rumsfeld, be printed in the RECORD in support of this resolution.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE,  
Washington, DC, November 19, 2004.

Hon. BILL FRIST,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: The Department of Defense takes great pride in its longstanding and rich tradition of support to the Boy Scouts of America. Accordingly, the Department of Defense supports the proposed Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense should continue to exercise its statutory authority to support the activities of the Boy Scouts of America, in particular the periodic national and world Boy Scout Jamborees.

Sincerely,

DONALD RUMSFELD.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM RANDLE  
AND CONNIE MARIE HUDGENS

• Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, it is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today to honor William Randle and Connie Marie Hudgens on the occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. The Hudgens were married on November 10, 1934, in England, AR, and celebrated their Platinum Anniversary on November 10, 2004.

Mr. Hudgens was born in Cornersville, AR, on January 16, 1915. His family moved to England, Arkansas, in 1922 where he met and later married his wife, Connie Marie Saulter.

Mr. Hudgens is a retired farmer and heavy equipment operator. He contributed greatly to Arkansas' highway system with his work on the construction of Interstates 30 and 40.

Mrs. Hudgens retired from a position with Wal-Mart and worked with several other companies in central Arkansas. Her most important and rewarding role, however, was as a wife and mother.

The Hudgens raised two beautiful daughters, Joyce Cates of North Little Rock, AR, and Sandra Evans of Lonoke, AR. Their lives have also been blessed with six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Hudgens now reside in Lonoke, AR. They are devoted members of the Lonoke Baptist Church, where Mr. Hudgens serves as a Deacon Emeritus.

It is my honor and privilege to join the Hudgens' family and friends in recognizing the very special and momentous occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary. I ask my colleagues to join me in offering Mr. and Mrs. Hudgens best wishes for continued happiness.●

JUDGE WILLIAM AUGUSTUS  
BOOTLE

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of U.S. District Judge William Augustus Bootle. Judge Bootle passed away yesterday at his home in Macon at the age of 102.

Judge Bootle and I became friends as I began my law practice 36 years ago. His leadership and integrity have had a great impact on my role as a public servant. From our first meeting until now, Judge Bootle and I have maintained a close working relationship and have had many opportunities to interact over the years.

A stalwart of our country's judicial system, Judge Bootle will be remembered for his unwavering commitment to doing what's right on behalf of all Americans, having led our country through some of the most difficult decisions in our Nation's history. Georgians will remember him for being fair and judicious in his verdicts and for being the type of judge before which all lawyers like to practice.

He showed an exemplary sort of courage in the fight to desegregate the South and helped resolve many hard fought battles respective to the integration of Georgia's education systems. To this end, Judge Bootle was responsible for the admittance of the first black students in the University of Georgia.

I would like to take this opportunity to quote from a book written by Frederick Allen which is entitled "Atlanta Rising." This book deals with a lot of history which took place in the At-

lanta area during the years of the civil rights movement. Two black applicants who were denied admittance to the University of Georgia filed suit in the middle district of Georgia, and quoting from this book, I read as follows:

Two black applicants, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, went to the court attacking the welter of excuses University of Georgia officials had concocted to keep them out. The two made a convincing case that the only reason they had been denied admission was segregation, pure and simple. In a ruling issued late on the afternoon of Friday, January 6, 1961, Judge William A. Bootle ordered Hunter and Holmes admitted to the school, not in six months or a year, but bright and early the next Monday morning.

In the 1960s in Georgia, that took great judicial integrity.

In the 105th Congress, my good friend Senator Paul Coverdell and I successfully led the charge to designate the Federal building and U.S. courthouse in Macon, GA, as the "William Augustus Bootle Federal Building and United States Courthouse" in the honor of his steadfast service to the people of Georgia.

The legacy of Judge Bootle will continue to impact countless individuals across our great Nation and I know he will be sorely missed—but honored in high regard by future generations. My wife Julianne and I are proud to have counted Judge Bootle a close friend, and extend our deepest condolences and prayers to his family and loved ones.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:48 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 16. Concurrent resolution congratulating the people of Ukraine for conducting a democratic, transparent, and fair runoff presidential election on December 26, 2004, and congratulating Viktor Yushchenko on his election as President of Ukraine and his commitment to democracy and reform.

H. Con. Res. 20. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

H. Con. Res. 21. Concurrent resolution providing for an adjournment or recess of the two Houses.

The message further announced that pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Joint Economic Committee: Mr. SAXTON of New Jersey.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 703(c) of the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000 (50 U.S.C. 435 note), the Minority Leader appoints the following named individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Public Interest Declassification Board for an initial 2-year term: Mr. David Skaggs of Colorado.

At 4:39 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by