

This deferral serves as evidence that the illegitimate military junta does indeed respond to international pressure, particularly from its neighbors. In the wake of this news, I renew my calls for countries in the region to pressure the junta to immediately and unconditionally release Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience in Burma and to continue their calls for political reform in that country; the United Nations Security Council to discuss and debate the threat the junta poses to its own people and the entire region; and the community of democracies to continue to keep freedom in Burma a top priority.

The assertion by the SPDC that the deferral will allow the generals to focus on the “democratization process” in Burma is as hollow as it is false.

The international community—especially the United States and the United Kingdom—must be clear that the junta will be judged not by what it says but by what it does. So long as Suu Kyi and other innocent Burmese remain imprisoned and without a voice in the political deliberations in Burma, there simply can be no credible democratization process in Rangoon.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

##### ADA'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I was not able to make the roll call vote on this resolution commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I had a family commitment that I had to keep, and I knew that this resolution would pass overwhelmingly, and I needed to be with my family.

I did want to take time to hail this special occasion and I want to reaffirm my strong support for the Americans with Disability Act. This historic legislation has helped to ensure that people with disabilities can have access to a wide range of programs and policies to help them fully participate in public life and culture. Over the years, I am proud of the progress our country has made in including people with disabilities in public places and events. This sweeping legislation is perhaps one of the most significant pieces of legislation since the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Under this bold law, people with disabilities were ensured nondiscrimination in employment and public accommodations, including transportation and telecommunications. Implementation has not been easy, and it is still ongoing. While meaningful progress has been made, there is still a great deal of work to do to achieve the bold goal of the Americans with Disability Act.

We must continue to push hard to end discrimination and fully embrace inclusion, but today we should also cel-

lbrate the strides made since 1990 on behalf of people with disabilities.

##### 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today we celebrate the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990—one of the greatest civil rights laws in our history. Fifteen years ago, the Nation adopted the fundamental principle that people should be measured by what they can do, not what they can't. The Americans with Disabilities Act began a new era of opportunity for millions of disabled citizens who had been denied full and fair participation in society.

For generations, people with disabilities were pitied as people who needed charity, not opportunity. Out of ignorance, the Nation accepted discrimination for decades, and yielded to fear and prejudice. The passage of the ADA finally ended these condescending and suffocating attitudes—and widened the doors of opportunity for all people with disabilities.

The 15th anniversary of this landmark legislation is a time to reflect on how far we have come in improving the “real life” possibilities for the Nation's 56 million people with disabilities. In fact, the seeds were planted long before 1990.

In 1932, the United States elected a disabled person to the highest office in the land. He became one of the greatest Presidents in our history. But even Franklin Roosevelt felt compelled by the prejudice of his times and hid his disability as much as possible. The World War II generation began to change all that.

The 1940s and the 1950s introduced the Nation to a new class of Americans with disabilities—wounded and disabled veterans returning from war to an inaccessible society. Even before the war ended, rehabilitation medicine had been born. Disability advocacy organizations began to rise. Disability benefits were added to Social Security. Each decade since then has brought significant new progress and more change.

In the 1960s, Congress responded with new architectural standards, so we could have a society everyone could be a part of. No one would have to wait outside a new building because they were disabled.

The 1970s convinced us that greater opportunities for fuller participation in society were possible for the disabled. Congress responded with a range of steps to improve the lives of people with mental retardation, to support the right of children with disabilities to attend public schools, to guarantee the right of people with disabilities to vote in elections, and to insist on greater access to cultural and recreational programs in their communities.

The 1980s brought a new realization, however, that when we talk about help-

ing people with disabilities, we can't just rely on government programs. We need to involve private industry as well. Congress guaranteed fair housing opportunities for people with disabilities, required fair access to air travel, and made telecommunications advances available for people hard of hearing or deaf.

The crowning achievement in these decades of progress was passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and its promise of a new and better life to every disabled citizen, in which their disabilities would no longer put an end to their dreams.

As one eloquent citizen with a disability has said, “I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the State look after me. I want to take the calculated risk, to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I want to enjoy the benefits of my creations and face the world boldly, and say, this is what I have done.”

Our families, our neighbors, and our friends with disabilities have taught us in ways no books can teach. The inclusion of people with disabilities enriches all our lives. My son Teddy continues to teach me every day the greatest lesson of all that disabled does not mean unable.

As the saying goes, when people are excluded from the social fabric of a community, it creates a hole—and when there is a hole, the entire fabric is weaker. It lacks richness, texture, and the strength that diversity brings. The fabric of our Nation is stronger today than it was 15 years ago, because people with disabilities are no longer left out and left behind. And because of that, America is a greater and better and fairer nation.

Today in this country we see the signs of the progress that mean so much in our ongoing efforts to include persons with disabilities in every aspect of life—the ramps beside the steps, the sidewalks with curb-cuts to accommodate wheelchairs, the lifts for helping disabled people to take buses to work or the store or to a movie.

Disabled students are no longer barred from schools and denied an education. They are learning and achieving at levels once thought impossible. They are graduating from high schools, enrolling in universities, joining the workforce, achieving their goals, enriching their communities and their country.

They have greater access than ever to the rehabilitation and training they need to be successfully employed and become productive, contributing members of their communities.

With the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, we finally linked civil rights closely to health care. It isn't civil and it isn't right to send a disabled person to work without the health care they need and deserve.

These milestones show us that we are well on the way to fulfilling the promise of a new, better, and more inclusive

life for citizens with disabilities—but we still have a way to go. Today, as we rightly look back with pride, we also need to look ahead.

We still face many challenges, especially in areas such as health care and in home-based and community-based services and supports. Many people with disabilities still do not have the health care they need.

A strong Medicare prescription drug benefit is essential for all people with disabilities. Today, about one in six Medicare beneficiaries—over six million people—are people with disabilities under age 65. Over the next 10 years that number is expected to increase to 8 million.

These persons are much less likely to be able to obtain or afford private insurance coverage. Many of them are forced to choose between buying groceries, paying their mortgage, or paying for their medication.

Families raising children with significant disabilities deserve health care for their children. No family should be forced to go bankrupt, stay in poverty, or give up custody of their child in order to get needed health care for their disabled child. They deserve the right to buy in to Medicaid, so that their family can stay together and stay employed.

People with disabilities and older Americans need community-based assistance as well, so they can live at home with their families and in their communities. We need to find a way to ensure this support is available, without forcing families into poverty. This is today's challenge to the Nation, and we need to work together to meet it.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was an extraordinary milestone in the pursuit of the American dream. Many disability and civil rights leaders in communities throughout the country worked long and hard and well to achieve it.

To each of you, I say thank you. It is all of you who are the true heroes of this achievement, and who will lead us in the fight to keep the ADA strong in the years ahead.

Sadly, the Supreme Court is not on our side. In the past 15 years, it has restricted the intended scope of the ADA. Imagine you are a person with epilepsy in a job you love and you get excellent personnel reviews. You are taking medicine that controls the seizures and you have no symptoms. But your employer finds out you have epilepsy and fires you. Should you be able to sue your employer for discrimination? Congress intended you should—but the Supreme Court ruled you can't.

The Court continues to carve out exception after exception in the ADA. But discrimination is discrimination, and no attempt to blur that line or write out exceptions into the law should be tolerated. Congress wouldn't do it and it is wrong for the Supreme Court to do it.

The ADA was a spectacular example of bipartisan cooperation and success.

Passed by overwhelming majorities in both the House and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats alike took rightful pride in the goals of the law and its many accomplishments.

I know that the first President Bush, Senator Bob Dole, and many Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle consider their work on the ADA to be among their finest accomplishments in public service. It is widely regarded today as one of the true giant steps in our ongoing two-centuries-old civil rights revolution.

The need for that kind of bipartisan cooperation is especially critical today, as the Senate considers the nomination of John Roberts to fill Justice O'Connor's vacancy on the Supreme Court. Many people are generally aware of Justice O'Connor's role in a number of landmark decisions on reproductive and civil rights. Few know, though, that she cast the deciding vote in *Lane v. Tennessee* in 2004, the 5-4 ruling on the constitutionality of the ADA and whether Congress has the power to prohibit the exclusion of people with disabilities from public facilities in communities across the country.

The four dissenting Justices, in the name of States' rights, believed that Congress had no authority to do so. The case was brought by a paraplegic who complained that he was forced to crawl up the steps of the local courthouse to gain entry to the building. Justice O'Connor's swing vote upheld the ADA and the right of Congress under the Constitution to pass this landmark law to protect persons with such disabilities and guarantee their access to courts and other public facilities.

The Senate's decision on the confirmation of Judge Roberts to the Supreme Court may very well determine whether the ADA will survive as we know it. His views on a wide range of issues are little known, but some of his views raise serious questions about his position on the rights of those with disabilities, and Senators have a clear responsibility in the coming hearings to determine his views on these basic issues.

Hopefully, the new Supreme Court will continue to support the right of Congress to act in this important area, so that the extraordinary progress of the past 15 years will be sustained, not undermined. I intend to do all I can to see that it is.

Today, more than ever, disability need no longer mean the end of the American dream. Our goal is to banish stereotypes and discrimination, so that every disabled person can realize the dream of working and living independently, and being a productive and contributing member of our community.

That goal should be the birthright of every American—and the ADA opened the door for every disabled American to achieve it.

A story from the debate on the ADA eloquently made the point. A post-

master in a town was told to make his post office accessible. The building had 20 steep steps leading up to a revolving door at the only entrance. The postmaster questioned the need to make such costly repairs. He said, "I've been here for 35 years, and in all that time, I've yet to see a single customer come in here in a wheelchair." As the Americans with Disabilities Act has proved so well, if you build the ramp, they will come, and they will find their field of dreams.

So let's ramp up our own efforts across the country. We need to keep building those ramps, no matter how many steps stand in the way. We will not stop today or tomorrow or next month or next year. We will not ever stop until America works for all Americans.

I ask all Senators to join me today in committing to keep the ADA strong. It is an act of conscience, an act of community, and above all, an act of continued hope for the future.

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on a topic that has great importance to me and to the citizens of New Jersey. Fifteen years ago, Congress passed historic civil rights legislation based on the fundamental principle that this great Nation of ours benefits from the talents of every citizen. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) began an era of opportunity for 54 million Americans. In the 15 years since, this landmark legislation has thrown open doors and provided equal opportunities for people with disabilities. The ADA has brought the American dream within reach of millions of Americans.

I regret that I was unable to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the ADA with my Senate colleagues. Last night, I joined the family of Dwayne Reeves, a Newark school police officer killed in the line of duty, for the officer's wake. My deepest sympathies and my prayers are with his family as they grieve this senseless and tragic loss.

In the 15 years since the passage of the ADA, we have witnessed dramatic changes throughout the Nation—from greater public accommodation at places of business and commercial establishments to the expansion of government services for disabled citizens and the stunning advances in transportation and telecommunications technology. Citizens who could not fully participate in their communities are now able to go to the park, visit a movie theater, or attend a ballgame. In my home State of New Jersey, beach communities from Sandy Hook to Cape May have installed wheelchair access ramps and provide beach wheelchairs for disabled individuals, ensuring that all citizens can join family and friends for a relaxing day at the beach. These steps have enabled many citizens to contribute to their communities, make the most of their abilities, and live their lives to the fullest.

Yet we must not be content to stop here. There is still much work to be

done to ensure that all Americans, especially those who were discriminated against until 15 years ago, are given an equal chance at using all of America's tools for success. This is why I, along with my colleague Senator HARKIN and so many others, have worked to improve and expand the Ticket to Work, Workforce Investment Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. These programs provide unparalleled opportunity to Americans with disabilities by equipping them with the skill sets necessary to work in education, science, business, government and other fields that weren't previously accessible. In addition, I plan to continue my efforts to defend and strengthen the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act because equal opportunity does not exist without equal access to education.

The ADA is about ensuring that every American can participate fully in all of the daily activities that many of us take for granted. Whether it is using the phone, going out to dinner, or commuting to work on public transportation, the ADA ensures that all citizens have the ability to carry on their personal affairs. Fifteen years ago, we said yes to inclusion, yes to independence, and yes to integration into every aspect of society for people with disabilities. We have made a lot of progress since that day. Let us make sure we continue down this path by providing equal opportunity and ensuring that our Nation benefits from the unique abilities of all Americans.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today marks the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a truly momentous occasion that the Senate marked yesterday by voting 87-0 in support of a resolution recognizing and honoring this anniversary. On this anniversary, we celebrate one of the great, landmark civil rights laws of the 20th century—a long overdue emancipation proclamation for people with disabilities.

We also celebrate the men and women, from all across America, whose daily acts of protest, persistence and courage moved this law forward to passage 15 years ago.

We have made great progress in America in the last 15 years, and evidence of that progress can be found all around us. It has changed lives—and changed our Nation. It has made the American dream possible for tens of millions of people with disabilities.

But, our work is not yet complete in fulfilling the four great goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities. I cannot think of a better way to celebrate the anniversary of the ADA than by rededicating ourselves to these goals. I look forward to working with my fellow Senators and the disability community to building on the progress that we have made over the past 15 years. Toward that end, I ask unani-

mous consent to print in the RECORD a "Statement of Solidarity" from over 700 disability rights and civil rights organizations, led by the American Association of Persons with Disabilities and the National Council on Independent Living, that highlights the many challenges we face as we continue on the path that leads to liberty and justice for all. I hope that my fellow Senators will review this document carefully, as I believe it raises a number of important issues that we should consider as we once again rededicate ourselves to realizing the full promise of the ADA.

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

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY ON 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT  
JULY 26, 2005

Fifteen years ago today, with bipartisan support in Congress and broad endorsements from the civil rights coalition, President George H. W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), calling for the "shameful wall of exclusion" to come tumbling down. As we mark this significant anniversary, we celebrate improvements in access to polling places and the secret ballot, government services and programs, transportation, public places, communication and information technology. Parents pushing strollers, workers delivering packages, and travelers pulling roller bags have grown accustomed to curb cuts, ramps, and other accessibility features less common in 1990. Our country is more accessible today thanks to the ADA, and all Americans are better off.

Although substantial progress has been made, we are reminded every day of the significant remnants of the "shameful wall of exclusion" that continue to prevent this great country from realizing the full promise of the ADA.

The majority of Americans with disabilities continue to live in poverty and unnecessary isolation.

Most adults with disabilities are either not working or not working to their full potential, robbing the economy of the contributions of tens of millions of would-be workers.

Children and youth in special education continue to drop out of school in alarming numbers before obtaining a regular high school diploma.

The promises of higher education, accessible and affordable housing and transportation, quality affordable healthcare, and a living wage continue to elude many adults with disabilities and their families.

The ADA is slowly driving policy changes that have enabled more people with significant mental and physical disabilities to live independently in the community, but the ongoing institutional bias in the Medicaid program keeps too many people trapped in nursing homes and other institutions, unable to enjoy the freedoms and personal choices about where and how to live that other Americans take for granted.

New technologies are increasing the independence and productivity of many Americans. Yet, advances in technology alone are not guaranteed to improve the lives of people with disabilities. As we develop applications like Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) telephony, wireless telecommunications, widespread broadband internet connectivity, new medical devices, new computer applications, and a plethora of new genetic tests, it is critical that these technologies be designed and used in a way that increases the inclusion, independence, and empowerment of Americans with disabilities as well as America's growing senior population.

The ADA has begun to change the landscape of our cities and towns, but a civil rights law alone does not create the kind of transformation of attitudes that Americans with disabilities, their families, and allies are fighting to achieve. This kind of change requires widespread discussion, education, and consciousness-raising.

In 2005, how do fears, myths, and stereotypes continue to artificially limit understanding and acceptance of disability as a form of human diversity?

What role do the mass media and entertainment industries play in forming public perceptions of disability, and how can decision makers in these important fields be influenced to produce more content that depicts the actual life experience and first person perspectives of people with disabilities?

What can be done to further improve accessibility at the design stage of new products and programs?

How can disability awareness and disability-friendly practices create more productive places of business and learning?

What concrete actions can worship communities and sports and recreation programs take to foster full participation of children, youth, and adults with disabilities in these activities?

Why do so many Americans continue to view disability as a fate worse than death, and how do these views affect surrogate medical decisionmaking and the application of new genetic testing technologies?

These questions form the basis of an American conversation that still needs to take place.

Widespread social change cannot simply be legislated, and it will not occur without bold leadership from all sectors of American society.

Public and private employers, in particular, must make a serious, concerted effort to recruit and advance qualified workers with disabilities within their labor force.

Election officials must take the necessary actions to ensure that every adult is able to enter his or her polling place and cast a secret and independent vote.

School administrators and university presidents must embrace their responsibility to deliver a world-class education to all their students.

It is time for leaders across America—business owners, little league coaches, moms and dads, sheriffs and clergy—to reject exclusion, paternalism, and segregation and to take personal responsibility for removing barriers to full participation that still exist in every community in this country.

With the aim of making America work better for everyone, the undersigned organizations pledge to build on the progress of the last 15 years and join together to promote the full participation and self-determination of the more than 50 million U.S. children and adults with disabilities. We believe that disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way should limit the right of all people to make choices, pursue meaningful careers, live independently, and participate fully in all aspects of society. We encourage every American to join us in this cause, so that our country may continue on the path that leads to liberty and justice for all.

Signed by 743 organizations.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to remember an important occasion that represents 15 years in our Nation's history and welcome the opportunity to speak on these issues which are near and dear to my heart. On July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans

with Disabilities Act, ADA, with bipartisan support in Congress under the leadership of then-Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, my predecessor from Kansas, and thanks in large part to the dedication and hard work of my current colleague, the good Senator from Iowa, Tom HARKIN, as well as current Senators CHARLES GRASSLEY of Iowa and DANIEL INOUYE of Hawaii.

Today we must continue to dismantle, brick by brick, the "shameful wall of exclusion" that existed in the United States previous to the existence of the ADA. And, building on our 15 years of experiences in tearing down the wall of exclusion, we must continue to bring to realization the full promise of the ideas entailed in the ADA. To carry on this significant legacy, we must recognize that, today, we face new challenges and new policy considerations.

It is estimated that there are now in America 50 million citizens with some sort of disability. An amazing individual from Kansas who visited D.C. last week to tell his story is 7-year-old Matthew Whaley. Matthew was denied access to the local recreation department's baseball league because he happened to have cerebral palsy. However, because of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he is now showing off his All-Star baseball skills as an outfielder.

When I think about what Congress needs to accomplish for people with disabilities over the next few years, to continue to achieve the dream that should have been, and that the ADA began to make possible, I consider what policies we need to change to ensure that Matthew, and others with disabilities, can continue to make a positive difference in this world.

We must consider America's aging population. According to the U.S. Census, by the year 2050, 21 percent of America's total population will be age 65 and over. It is understood that the probability of having a disability increases with age. This means that America's population with disabilities will continue to grow.

It is imperative that we look for ways to meet the needs of this population and ensure that they can continue to live independent, fulfilling lives. Just recently, I spent time with a constituent of mine who embodies this idea—a man named Rick Davidson from Olathe, KS. Rick is a motivational speaker for at-risk youth, has traveled across the country meeting with lawmakers on disabilities' policy issues, and is attending college for an associates degree in Web design. Rick has lived a healthy and active life as a quadriplegic for almost 18 years—doctors initially estimated that Rick had just 16 years to live.

Another way we can make a positive impact for the future is through supporting endeavors such as the New Freedom Initiative—a comprehensive program to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society by increasing access to

assistive technologies, expanding educational and employment opportunities, and promoting increased access to daily community life.

In the context of changing public policy, we must also examine how effectively government programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, are serving the needs of individuals with disabilities. For example, the Medicare Program's benefit for mobility devices has an "in the home" restriction which limits coverage to only those mobility devices that are necessary within a patient's home. Unfortunately, this does not address the needs of a patient who would use this device to obtain access to his or her community, work, school, physician's office, pharmacy, or place of worship. In view of this, I recently signed on a letter requesting that Medicare's mobility device "in the home" restriction be modified to improve community access for Medicare recipients with disabilities. I am also a cosponsor of legislation that would offer lower income families who have children with disabilities the opportunity to acquire health care coverage through the Medicaid Program.

Along these lines, Congress must address the issue of accessibility to long-term care for the elderly and those with disabilities. Currently, we have a Medicaid system that spends approximately two-thirds of its dollars on institutional care and approximately one-third on community services. This antiquated policy effectively removes disabled and elderly individuals from their community, family, and friends. Even from a cost perspective, this system does not make sense. According to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the cost of nursing home care ranges from \$30,000 to \$80,000 per year, while the annual cost of home and community care is much lower.

The bottom line is that Congress must work to align the Medicare and Medicaid Programs with goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act. After all, we live in America and in this country we celebrate independence, self-determination, uniqueness, and a sense of community. We must maintain these ideals for our children as well. This year, I introduced the Prenatally Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act. For some conditions that can be detected in the womb, we are aborting 80 percent or more of the babies who test positive. The effect of this type of "weeding out" is the creation of a sort of new eugenics, a form of systematic, disability-based discrimination. The latter process is to the detriment of our society.

In addition to the many abilities that persons with disabilities have, these individuals so often have a perspective the rest of us don't have. We learn compassion, heroism, humility, courage, and self-sacrifice from these special individuals—and their gift to us is to inspire us, by their example, to achieve these virtues ourselves.

In our discussion of fostering independence, we must keep in mind the

importance of guaranteeing all individuals their right to vote. Our citizens with disabilities deserve equal access and an equal voice in our democratic process. Initiatives such as the Help America Vote Act, enacted in 2002, created vital grant programs ensuring electoral participation by persons with disabilities and making polling places accessible to persons with disabilities. Congress must continue to look for ways to expand access to our electoral system for persons with disabilities.

While we can change public policy to reflect the ideas embodied in the ADA, it is just as important to seek change at the individual level. Every human being has the ability to change their own ideas and actions in their daily life as they meet an elderly person or a person with disabilities. As Americans, we have a God-given duty to love each and every person, and treat them, not as a means to an end, but as an end in and of themselves. As a Nation, we are so blessed with the presence of individuals who are different than us, and who have the ability to teach us; to teach us about love, about compassion, and about what it means to have strength and courage from within.

My vision for America is to continue to build on the momentous legacy of the ADA, where we as citizens continue to celebrate the breadth of experience and life lessons that persons with disabilities offer us.

Over 137,000 individuals with disabilities reside in my State of Kansas. My hope for them is the same as my hope for all Americans who have disabilities: that we as a society and as a government do everything in our power to foster their independence, to nurture their soul and to embrace their contributions to society.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Senate amendment No. 1389 to postpone the current round of domestic military base closures.

The threats confronting the United States today are vastly different from those during the Cold War, and we must shift our defense posture to address new and emerging enemies. I do not dispute that closing and realigning excess military capacity is critical to that endeavor. However, I fear we are rushing to conclude this process before having all pertinent national security information to make a well-informed decision. In short, I believe we have put the cart before the horse.

While I support delaying this base closure round, I do not dismiss the important work of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The Commissioners and their staff should be commended for their diligent efforts to carefully review and evaluate each recommendation made by the Pentagon.

Having said that, I believe closing military installations without thoughtful consideration is short-