

They have seen cradles next to methamphetamine labs. All of this is a problem with methamphetamine that does not exist with other drugs, as dangerous and as terrible as other drugs may be.

Methamphetamine is epidemic. The fact that it is relatively easy to make the drug and the information about it is all over the Internet means that there are, in my State alone, law enforcement tells me, hundreds, perhaps thousands of labs operating in isolated areas, and often in not so isolated areas. The home next door may be making methamphetamine. They make it in cars and vans. I have fire protection district chiefs in urban and suburban areas tell me half the vehicle fires they are fighting are meth related, because this is a dangerous process in which this drug is made, even resulting in fires or explosions—and these are chemical fires they have to fight.

I said in urban or suburban areas, because it is not just a rural problem anymore. It started there, but it spread to our urban and suburban areas. The consciousness of this moved many Members of this body to support this bill when Senator FEINSTEIN and I sponsored it, and to support it passionately. I was moved and pleased by the number of Senators who came, at our initial press conference, and spoke movingly because, of course, we get around in our States. We talk to people. We see the devastation and we have heard law enforcement, and the Senate has acted by adding the Combat Meth Act to this legislation.

I am very pleased about it. We have a chance now to send this over to the House. If the Senate approves the bill, which I am confident it will, I hope early next week, then we can get this bill passed and sent to the President's desk.

I promised to be brief. I was not, although I am sure listeners understand that brevity in the Senate means something different than it may mean in other places. But the bill contains a number of important provisions. Probably the centerpiece of it is a provision that would take cold medicines that contain pseudoephedrine and put them behind pharmacy counters around the country. This has been done in a number of States. Missouri is a leader in this. Oklahoma is a leader. Iowa is a leader. I thank Senator COBURN for his efforts in helping us, and Senator GRASSLEY for his efforts, helping us. They know what methamphetamine is, coming from the States from which they come. This would put these precursor drugs behind pharmacy counters. It means consumers will still have access but meth cooks will not. Because they have to assemble 20 or 30 or 40 packages of cold medicines in order to make methamphetamine, they will not be able to do it anymore. They will not be able to steal it or buy it because it is going to be behind pharmacy counters.

Then, in addition, there are a number of targeted grant programs designed to

assist our law enforcement and social service workers stopping this drug and dealing with the terrible fallout from it.

I am grateful to all those involved. We need to move now to the next step. We need to keep working in other ways, above and beyond this bill, in which we can stop this deadly drug.

I am grateful to all those who helped make this day possible, and I know I speak for Senator FEINSTEIN saying we are very pleased the Senate has adopted this and added it to this measure and that now we are in a position to send it to the House.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, before the Senator from Missouri leaves the floor, I want to extend on behalf of every Member of the Senate our thanks to him for his leadership in fighting the scourge of methamphetamine. The Senator from Missouri has become the leader in the Senate in combating this scourge. On behalf of all Members of the Senate, I thank him for his extraordinarily effective work in this most important area.

Mr. TALENT. Will the Senator yield for a minute?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I yield the floor.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, the Senator has yielded the floor so I can add, for a moment, that I very much appreciate his kind words. I did not in my remarks talk at great length about Senator FEINSTEIN's efforts. I will have the opportunity to do it. I have done that in the past and I will have the opportunity to do that again.

The remarks of the Senator are very fine, but let me say Senator FEINSTEIN has been on this issue since at least the 1990s. She saw it coming. We have not completed anything yet. We still have to get this over to the House and pass it. There are other things we have to do. The remarks of the Senator are very kind, but Senator FEINSTEIN is the outstanding leader. It has been a great pleasure to work with her to this point and I look forward to continuing to work with her and other Senators from both sides of the aisle, getting this done completely, including the Senator from Kentucky. I know what a problem this is in Kentucky. He and I talked about this. I am grateful for his assistance.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Minnesota I have

taken the floor today to express our condolences to Rehnquist family for their loss and gratitude and admiration for his extraordinary life of service.

The Midwest, where William Rehnquist was born, does not have the high mountains or the pounding ocean surf of other parts of the country. We learn from our geography the value of moderation and dependability. William Rehnquist was a solid human being whose consistency and resolve as a member of the Supreme Court benefited the whole country in turbulent times.

The historian Whitehead has written that the essence of leadership is maintaining order in the midst of change, and change in the midst of order. William Rehnquist lived out the principle that both change and order are necessary in the law and he knew when we needed each.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist served America with great distinction on the Supreme Court for 33 years. His profound respect for the Constitution and his collegial relationships throughout the judiciary will be a standard for future justices. He knew that his role was more than deciding cases: it was to raise the knowledge of and respect for the rule of law.

Mr. Rehnquist took his seat as an associate Supreme Court justice in 1972 after being appointed by President Richard Nixon, and became Chief Justice in 1986, during the Reagan administration.

His opinions reflected a staunch adherence to the constitutional principle of State's rights. He also displayed an untiring willingness to work with his colleagues to find a compromise without minimizing his position. Chief Justice Rehnquist will be remembered as one of our most influential chief justices in history.

As the Court's most junior justice, Rehnquist made state sovereignty his central principle of American constitutional law. At times, especially in those early years in 1973, he stood alone in his support of State sovereignty but continued this fight to the end of his time on the bench.

Chief Justice Rehnquist succeeded in shifting the balance of power between States and the Federal government. The control and limitation of Federal control will always be a legacy of Chief Justice Rehnquist. He protected the Constitution in his application of the law and took great pride in his protection of civil liberties and the importance of freedom and the democratic spirit in our Constitution.

As Chief Justice, Mr. Rehnquist made his mark on the Court with grace in an environment where justices of varying opinions could express themselves free from personal attacks and or ideological stalemates. His was a Court of strong personalities who operated in profound respect for each other and the country gained from their wisdom and discourse. He was a great leader and effective administrator of the Supreme Court.

I was personally touched by Chief Justice Rehnquist's determination and heroic passion to serve while battling cancer. As we often hear, we are a government of law and not men and women, and that is true. But our constitutional principles are not self-enforcing. We depend on men and women of good hearts and sharp minds to steer us through difficult moments when the issues of the day collide with our Constitution of over 200 years of age.

He was to the end a midwesterner: strong, reliable and devoted to the idea of leaving things better than he found them. The whole Nation, and future generations of Americans should be deeply grateful for the legacy he has left.

SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTING PROVISIONS IN H.R. 3673

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Senate a proposal which was included in the hurricane supplemental bill at the request of the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Defense. I wholeheartedly supported the supplemental bill and the funding it would provide to the individuals, families, and small businesses that experienced so much suffering in this terrible tragedy. Their plight should not be prolonged by delays in delivery of much-needed assistance funding. However, I believe that this particular provision would seriously harm small businesses in the Gulf Coast region and all across America—by excluding them from Government contracts and subcontracts for the relief and rescue projects. While I appreciate the need to get supplies and services quickly in order to save lives, the provision at issue is not tailored to lifesaving, and we need to exercise caution in working around laws aimed at helping small business, in the rush to pass emergency appropriations.

The OMB's proposal extends to hurricane relief and rescue operations that the emergency procurement authority previously approved by Congress for military contingency operations in cases of attack by the weapons of mass destruction, war, or national emergency. Most importantly, the proposal raises the so-called "micro-purchase threshold" to \$250,000. These measures would abolish Small Business Act set-asides for U.S. small businesses and the Buy American Act preferences for U.S. manufacturers on all rescue and relief contracts for years to come, potentially undermine the Stafford Act preference for local business, individuals, and organizations in contracts for recovery from major disasters contained in the Stafford Act, and encourage waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal contracts and in the reconstruction efforts by drastically increasing the ability of low-level Government officials to make credit card charges.

The micro-purchase threshold was created in the 1990s to enable Government officials to quickly make limited purchases with Government credit cards and without regards to competition, small business, or other preference requirements. Congress strictly limited the current micro-purchase threshold amounts to \$2,500 for all acquisitions, except to \$2,000 for certain construction projects and to \$15,000 for U.S.-based military contingency operations and WMD response and recovery efforts.

This increase in the micro-purchase threshold was carefully adopted by Congress just 2 years ago, in November 2003, in response to the 9/11 and the global war on terror. The 2003 increase was implemented subject to strict limitations to ensure that contracting accountability and small business requirements are not supplanted—limitations which are absent from the language in this bill.

The OMB plan in this bill increases the micro-purchase threshold to \$250,000, a hundredfold increase. Without appropriate protections, such a massive increase distorts Congressional intent for the micro-purchases and opens doors to greater credit card contracting abuse. Government purchase card abuse has been the subject of investigative and legislative actions by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and by the Senate Finance Committee. Indeed, the leadership of these Committees, including Chairmen GRASSLEY and COLLINS as well as ranking member LIEBERMAN, already made known their opposition to the OMB proposal. The Government Accountability Office estimates that the Federal Government could have saved \$300 million a year by imposing greater accountability on the use of Government purchase cards. These losses stand to balloon along with the huge increases in credit card spending called for in this proposal. A massive expansion of the micro-purchase threshold could overwhelm the fragile accountability mechanisms for this program.

Most importantly, in addition to the high potential for waste and abuse, raising the micro-purchase threshold from its current levels to \$250,000 obliterates small business contracting set-asides for contracts that by law and by tradition have been going to small firms. The statutory "small business reserve" in the Small Business Act sets aside for small business concerns all Federal contracts in the amounts below \$100,000 and above the micro-purchase threshold, typically, \$2,500. Contracts at \$100,000 or less are uniquely suitable for performance by small firms. Excluding them now makes no sense.

Further, the DoD/OMB proposal for extension of the emergency procurement authority to Hurricane Katrina improperly expands the scope of this authority to future "relief" contracts and to contracts with only distant rel-

evance to Hurricane Katrina. As I already mentioned, the emergency procurement authority established a micro-purchase threshold increase to \$15,000, provided the purchases are "directly related" to military contingency operations or WMD recovery. Extension of this authority would take contracts ranging from \$15,000 to \$2,500 out of the statutory "small business reserve" under the Small Business Act. In addition, this authority would also allow large firms to exclude small businesses from subcontracts by treating all Katrina-related contracts as purchases of commercial items. Taking work away from small businesses as part of disaster relief is not the message we want to send.

Federal small business contracts are a vital source of business and jobs creation for small firms. Prior to Katrina, small business in disaster-affected States used to receive a significant boost from Federal contracts. Retaining, renewing, and enhancing these small business contracts will be critical for successful reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region. For example, in Fiscal Year 2003, Alabama small businesses received \$2.05 billion in Federal contracts, including \$191 million in construction contracts. Small businesses in the State of Mississippi received \$419 million in Federal contracts, with over a quarter of that amount, \$134 million, in construction contracts. Finally, Louisiana received \$712 million in small business contracts, including \$242 million in construction. Small business men and women in these States have the experience and the wherewithal to join hands in the relief and reconstruction of their communities. What they need is a chance to work and rebuild their businesses.

We have an obligation to help the small business sector of the Gulf Coast. I am very concerned about the import of the OMB contracting provision, and I will work to ensure that this provision is limited and modified in future legislation to ensure that it provides the right balance between speed and fairness in Government contracts.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I join my Senate colleagues in voicing my unwavering support to help Gulf Coast residents recover and rebuild their communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The \$60.5 billion in funding we have passed is a start toward restoring basic infrastructure and the economy, but we have a long way to go. This recovery will require much more of our time, resources and a comprehensive plan; I stand ready to work with my colleagues to do just that.

In the last 2 weeks, I have witnessed many good and bad things involving Hurricane Katrina. The generosity and compassion shown by families all over the Nation have redefined the meaning of good neighbor. In Arkansas, I have