

the administration and embassy officials around the world raise these values regularly with foreign governments, when we speak on behalf of persecuted dissidents, and when we act consistently in our own country, we will not only be working to ensure every person can worship as they see fit. We will also be ensuring a safer, peaceful, more secure world where the rights of all—the freedoms of all—are respected and celebrated.

RENT RELIEF TO FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss S. 2292, a bill to provide rent relief to the Federal judiciary. Our Federal judges and court administrators have expressed serious concerns about the rental charges assessed by the General Services Administration, GSA, in courthouses and other space occupied by the courts around the country. If enacted, this legislation would require the administrator of general services to charge the judicial branch no more rent than that which represents the actual costs of operating and maintaining its facilities. Specifically, it prohibits the General Services Administration from including amounts for capital costs, real estate taxes, except for those taxes actually paid by the administrator of general services to lessors, or administrative fees in rental charges.

The current budgetary problems caused by the judiciary's rental payments must be addressed. In fiscal terms, since 1986, the Federal Courts' rental payments to GSA have increased from \$133 million to \$912 million. The percentage of the judiciary's operating budget devoted to rent payments has escalated sharply from 15.7 percent in 1986 to about 22 percent in 2004. During this same time, the share of the Federal budget provided to the judiciary has dwindled as Congress has sought to tackle our Nation's increasing budget deficit. Even as overall resources available to the judiciary dwindle, analysts project that rental payments will reach approximately \$1.2 billion by 2009, which will be an estimated 25 percent of the judiciary's annual operating budget.

I believe that the courts are doing everything they possibly can to contain their costs without adversely affecting the administration of justice. The Federal judiciary has imposed a 24-month moratorium on the construction of any new courthouses and has stopped planning for many projects. If rent relief is not granted to the judiciary, more personnel cuts will be required in the near future, including the loss of another 4,000 jobs over the next 4 years.

In my view, this constitutes a near crisis in the Federal judiciary. Space and appropriate personnel play a significant role in our judicial system. The ready availability of appropriate courtrooms, jury deliberation and assembly rooms, and workspace for sup-

port staff all facilitate the administration of justice. Appropriate space for drug testing and monitoring of persons under supervision by Federal probation officers is of the utmost importance. It is critical that the courts have all the tools they need to carry out their mission. Providing this relief to the judiciary will allow them to improve the administration of justice for all Americans.

Additionally, serious building-related security problems in existing courthouses are also a key consideration. Courthouses should have secure passage for detainees to be transported, separating public passageways from these individuals. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many courthouses, including several courthouses in my home state of Texas. As an example, I recently wrote to Attorney General Gonzales to urge him to ensure that funding is granted to fix security concerns identified at the Midland Federal Courthouse as soon as possible. Affording the judiciary rent relief so they can devote more money to courthouse security is a good first step.

Finally, I think it is important to point out that this bill addresses the unequal treatment generally afforded the lower Federal courts. Many of the buildings used by other agencies and branches of the Federal Government are exempt from rent. For example, the Department of Defense pays no rent to GSA on the Pentagon or on military bases. The Treasury Department, which once housed GSA, pays no rent on the main Treasury building or on its Mints. The Supreme Court—unlike the lower Federal courts—pays no rent. Likewise, the Federal Reserve Board, the FDIC, and many other quasi-federal agencies do not pay rent to GSA. There is no rent paid on Federal prisons, embassies, NIH facilities, nuclear facilities, VA hospitals, EPA labs, or national parks and national forest facilities. Congress does not pay rent on the Capitol Building we're deliberating in today. Nor does Congress pay rent on the Senate or House office buildings or surrounding structures. Congress is charged rent by GSA only for a small amount of space for congressional State and district offices. The Federal judiciary—specifically, the lower Federal courts—lack that same advantage. This bill takes a step towards granting the judiciary equal treatment.

It is important that all who enter our Nation's courts are ensured fair and equitable treatment. This bill is a critical component in achieving this goal. I will work with Senator SPECTER and the other co-sponsors to get this bill moving through the judiciary committee as soon as possible.

PROVIDING RELIEF FOR THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY FROM EXCESSIVE RENT CHARGES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday Chairman SPECTER introduced a bill I cosponsored to provide relief for

the Federal judiciary from excessive rent charges assessed by the General Services Administration, GSA, for the use of courthouses and other spaces occupied by the courts across the Nation. Since 1986, the Federal courts' rental payments to GSA have increased dramatically, with the percentage of the judiciary's operating budget devoted to rent payments escalating from 15.7 percent in 1986 to approximately 22 percent in 2004. If no changes are made, this percentage is expected to continue to rise sharply. This legislation brings these rent charges under control by capping the rent charges at GSA's actual costs of operating and maintaining accommodations provided to the judicial branch, by specifying that certain capital costs, taxes, and administrative fees shall not be included in GSA's rent charges, and by establishing a means for repayment over time for the future costs of repair and alteration projects performed by GSA.

As the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have been concerned about the adverse effect of these rent payments on the administration of justice. On May 13, 2005, a bipartisan group of 11 members of the Judiciary Committee, including Chairman SPECTER and myself, sent a letter to GSA asking it to exercise its authority to exempt the judicial branch from all rental payments except those required to operate and maintain Federal court buildings and related costs. GSA's response has not been adequate. As set forth in that letter, the excessive rent paid by the judiciary will exacerbate severe personnel shortages by forcing more cuts and could also have impacts on courthouse security. The rent relief provided in this bill will help ensure that the judiciary continues to have the tools it needs to carry out its unique and vital function.

KATRINA ON THE GROUND

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina tore through the gulf coast States leaving in its wake death and destruction that none of us will soon forget. In the immediate aftermath, graphic images of people struggling to escape the flooding in New Orleans and digging through the rubble of their homes in Mississippi and Alabama filled our television sets and newspapers. People were outraged at the Government's response. They volunteered their time to aid in rescues. They donated their money to help the victims. But many soon moved on.

The problems faced by the residents of the gulf coast, however, have not gone away. Rebuilding is underway, but it will take years. We cannot forget the work that still needs to be done or the people who are still struggling.

That is why I am so impressed with a new volunteer initiative called Katrina on the Ground. Katrina on the Ground, or KOTG, will bring together students from across the country to help rebuild

the hurricane-ravaged cities of Mobile, AL, Biloxi, MS, and New Orleans, LA, during their spring break vacations. Each student will provide at least one week of assistance in the region after receiving a day of training in Selma, AL. This is a stunning commitment of time and energy given that many students spend their spring breaks at the beach or on vacation.

Choosing the 21st Century Youth Leadership camp in Selma, AL, as a training site was not a coincidence. Selma, as we all know, is where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led his last great march in 1965—the march that led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. KOTG's founders hope to build on the spirit of the civil rights movement, invigorating a new generation of leaders to effect change. As Kevin Powell, one of the founders points out, "There has been nothing like this since the student-led anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s or . . . the student sit-ins and freedom rides of the 1960s." A student army, 500 to 700 strong, sends a powerful message to residents of the gulf coast and the rest of the Nation that we care and we have not forgotten.

I commend these students, KOTG's partner organizations, and its founders KOTG for their creativity, their compassion, and their commitment to public service. KOTG gives us hope for the future and demonstrates that the leaders of tomorrow are already here, ready, and willing to face the toughest challenges of our time.

COMMITTEE TESTIMONY OF LYNETTE MUND

Mr. DORGAN. Earlier this month, Lynette Mund, a teacher and coach from West Fargo, ND, testified before the Senate Commerce Committee about the importance of women's athletics.

Lynette is a great athlete in her own right. She was a three-time national champion in basketball. Her home State of North Dakota has always been proud of her and is lucky to have her contributions at West Fargo High School.

Her excellent statement laid out the struggles of providing the opportunity for young women to participate in sports. I ask unanimous consent that her statement be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

TESTIMONY OF LYNETTE MUND—PROMOTING WOMEN IN SPORTS, FEBRUARY 1, 2006

Good morning, Chairman STEVENS, Senator INOUE and Members of the Committee. On behalf of the state of North Dakota, I would like to thank the Commerce Committee for hearing my testimony.

My name is Lynette Mund and I am a teacher and head girls basketball coach at West Fargo High School in West Fargo, North Dakota. I am here today to testify to the importance of women's athletics and the struggles of providing athletic opportunities to young girls in rural communities. I will

also discuss what I am doing to encourage more young girls to participate in sports in North Dakota.

Girls and women being involved in athletics has been a long discussed issue. Many questions have been asked, such as "Can girls' bodies handle it?" "Are girls mentally tough enough?" "Does it really make a difference in a girl's life?" I am here as evidence that the answers to the previous questions are all "Yes". The fact that I am in Washington, DC, testifying in front of the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee shows what a difference sports can make in a girl's life. Twenty years ago, I was a 12-year-old girl who was milking cows on my parent's dairy farm in rural North Dakota, and now I am here in our nation's capital with some of the most influential people in our country listening to what I have to say. I have always loved sports, but I had no idea where they would take me and the confidence they would give me.

At age 13, I was a skinny 8th grader who was stepping out on the basketball court to start my first varsity game, and by age 23, I was a 3-time NCAA Division II National Champion and a college graduate from North Dakota State University who had the confidence to leave North Dakota and move to the "big city" of St. Louis, MO. However, while I was in St. Louis, I always had a desire to move back to North Dakota and give back part of what I had been given. That opportunity presented itself when I was offered the head girls basketball coaching position at West Fargo High School. Being back in North Dakota not only afforded me the chance to work with female athletes in West Fargo, but I was also able to continue working with young girls back near my hometown of Milnor, ND, which has a population of 700 people.

As I stated earlier, I grew up on a dairy farm. I was a relatively naïve young lady without much self-confidence. I had always dreamed of going to college, but I knew it would not be affordable without a college scholarship. I remember standing out in the milk barn and hearing on the radio that a local basketball star, Pat Smykowski, had gotten a college scholarship to play basketball, and right then and there I knew that was what I wanted to do. Thankfully, due to the efforts of many great women before me, the chance to participate in college athletics was available; something my mother and many women from her generation never had an opportunity to do. My mom used to talk about wanting to play sports but not having the chance to compete. I sometimes sit and wonder how different my life would be without athletics. I wonder if I would have had the money to attend college, if I would have had the confidence to move away from my home state, and if I would have had the nerve to fly to Washington, DC, all by myself and speak in front of U.S. Senators. However, all of these things happened because I participated in athletics. As a result, I want to inform and inspire other young girls from rural North Dakota.

One of the biggest challenges in rural North Dakota is that there are very few opportunities for athletes to improve their skills. That is why over the last 12 years, I have offered over 40 basketball camps in North Dakota and Minnesota. I am proud to have given over 800 young women the opportunity to participate in their first basketball camp. For many of these young girls, my camps are the only exposure they will have to an athletic camp for the whole year. Over the years, I have had the chance to see some of my former campers continue their careers in high school athletics, some of which I have actually had to coach against! However, it was always worth it to see how far these

young ladies have come and the confidence they now carry. At the time they attended camp, you should have seen their eyes when I told them they could have the chance to play in high school or college someday. Some of these girls did not even realize this was an option for them. By exposing these young girls to athletics at an early age, it allows them to see that sports is an option. This is relevant to the future of women's athletics because equal access to sports in college only works if girls have the opportunity to get involved in athletics at an early age.

Getting these young ladies involved is even more evident when I look at athletic participation numbers for girls in North Dakota. According to figures from the 2004-2005 North Dakota High School Activities Association, females made up 49 percent of the student population in North Dakota. However, only 40 percent of the student-athletes were females. It is one of my goals to bring this number closer to 49 percent. This is important to me because I have first hand knowledge of how athletics can have a positive effect on a young woman.

I have been very fortunate to coach camps along with a high school basketball team. This year, I have 3 seniors at West Fargo who will be receiving athletic scholarships and playing college basketball next fall. I have had the chance to watch these young ladies grow and mature since their freshman year. They exude a confidence that was not there 3 years ago. They know they have the ability to do whatever they want in life and the self-assurance they will be successful.

By providing my basketball camps and coaching high school basketball, I hope that other young girls from my home state realize that there are many opportunities to participate in athletics, and even a young girl from a town of less than 1000 people can be a National Champion, a college graduate, and a successful, confident professional.

Thank you very much for your time.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN MEMORY OF FEMINIST PIONEER BETTY FRIEDAN

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to the life of one of the late 20th century's most influential feminists, Betty Friedan. Friedan died on February 4, 2006, at her home in Washington, DC, at the age of 85.

At her Smith College 15-year reunion, she famously prepared a survey of her classmates, the results of which eventually became her landmark book, "The Feminine Mystique." With this book, published in 1963, Friedan helped ignite the second wave of the feminist movement, and the book is now regarded as one of the most influential American books of the 20th century.

Friedan was the cofounder of three groundbreaking women's organizations which have greatly improved women's economic, personal, and political lives. In 1966, Friedan cofounded the National Organization for Women, NOW, and served as its first president until 1970. She also helped found what is now NARAL Pro-Choice America and the National Women's Political Caucus.

Friedan fought tirelessly for equal pay, safe and legal abortion, maternity leave, childcare for working parents, and an end to sex discrimination.