

border myself along with Senator COLEMAN.

We went to Tijuana and San Diego, Fort Huachuca in Arizona. We saw firsthand the mechanisms that are available and being used today that will secure our border. We also saw firsthand the huge holes because we have neither funded the intelligence equipment and the eyes in the sky nor put the manpower on the border.

I, for one, will hold myself responsible and will be a reminder to this entire Senate that when we pass an appropriations act this year for Homeland Security and enforcement of immigration and customs, if it doesn't include the unmanned aerial vehicles we need on the border and the agents we need to enforce immigration law, then we are turning our back on a problem that began in 1986 and has continued until this day, and that is the benign neglect of us to fund the necessary equipment, manpower, and material to make the laws of this country work to allow people to come here in the right way as easily as possible but with accountability, and the people who come here the wrong way, to know there is a consequence to pay.

Human nature is human nature. People will respond when they know what the story is. Right now, they know the story is that it is easier to get here by sneaking in. In this measure, we send a signal that there will be no amnesty, no more free pass nor a continued flow of illegal people coming into this country. Instead, there will be consequences for ignoring the law, and there will be respect and appreciation for a normal, rational immigration process to work, so that America's labor needs are met, but America respects the borders between ourselves, the nation of Canada and the nation of Mexico.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ISAKSON). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I want to express my support for the Senator's view that we need to certify that we have the enforcement system working for the immigration system before we make these other changes that allow people to be given amnesty or be given a right to stay here in some lawful way.

The reason that is important is this: To boil it down in 1 minute before I yield the floor, the reason that is important is that once we pass the policies—the amnesty that is in this bill, or whatever policies we eventually pass—to deal with new immigration for years to come or to deal with those already here, that becomes law then. The problem has been that no President whom I know of—Presidents Carter,

Reagan, Bush, Clinton, or Bush—has ever taken it as a personal interest to ensure that what happens on our borders actually works. So they have not asked for more money, more people or asked sufficiently for technology for it to work. And the Congress, as the Senator said, often doesn't fund it.

So what are we saying? Fundamentally, what happened in 1986, I believe, was that amnesty was granted and the promise to create a legal system in the future never developed. We have a very rightful responsibility to make sure that doesn't happen again. I think that is the intent of the Senator's amendment. I look forward to studying it, and I thank him for offering it.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask consent I be allowed to continue for a few minutes as though in morning business.

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

ERMA BYRD

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon my wife Marcelle and I went and said our final farewells to our Erma Byrd, the wife of our distinguished colleague and friend, Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia. Marcelle and I have been privileged to know both Senator and Mrs. Byrd for well over 30 years.

While there, we talked with the distinguished senior citizen from West Virginia and told him how much that relationship meant, but especially how much it meant to us to see a love affair such as theirs, one that continued from the time they were teenagers to the time of Mrs. Byrd's death.

Mrs. Byrd and my wife used to sometimes drive down together for Senate spouse meetings. Every time Marcelle would come back, she would tell me something new and valuable she had learned from Erma and how much that friendship meant.

In recent times, when illness stopped her ability to come here, I would talk with my good friend ROBERT BYRD and ask him how Erma was doing and to tell him that both she and Robert were in our prayers and our thoughts. Many of us will be at the funeral this weekend out of respect for both of them. I will be thinking of the privilege it has been to have known them both and how privileged I am to still have as a dear friend and colleague Senator ROBERT C. BYRD.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that 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.

The majority leader is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. FRIST pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 419 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator ROCKEFELLER, and under rule VI, paragraph 2, I ask that he may absent himself from Senate business and any rollcall votes during his recuperation from recent back surgery.

SECRETARY OF INTERIOR GALE NORTON

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the work of a good friend of mine and a distinguished public servant, Secretary of Interior Gale Norton. Today is her final day as Secretary of Interior. I am certain that her presence in that position will be missed.

Secretary Norton hails from my home State of Colorado where she built a reputation as a hardworking conservationist and public servant. In Colorado she served as the State's attorney general where she represented the State before the Supreme Court on several occasions. But arguing cases before the Supreme Court wasn't challenging enough for Gale, so when asked by President Bush to be the first female to head the Department of Interior she wholeheartedly agreed.

Throughout her time at Interior she employed a commonsense approach and an understanding of Western issues which has proven to be an asset to the agency and the Nation. It is vital to have someone who appreciates Western issues as Secretary of Interior. This understanding is so crucial because, on average, 52 percent of the land mass in the 13 Western States is federally owned, while the average for the rest of the Nation is 4 percent.

Secretary Norton has guided Interior through one of the most challenging periods in the Department's history with an enthusiasm, confidence, and expertise that will be difficult to match.

She saw the Department through some of the most devastating fire seasons in recent history, and in response

to this was charged with implementing one of the most important natural resource laws ever enacted, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The benefits of this legislation and her actions are already being seen on the ground on public land throughout the Nation.

Secretary Norton also recognized the importance of domestic energy production before many others; her legacy will help decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources. This understanding of energy needs was priceless as she worked with Congress on the most comprehensive energy reform legislation in decades.

She also worked tirelessly to improve the efficiency of DOI, reducing duplicative measures and cutting bureaucracy while improving citizen satisfaction with the Department.

She excelled at pushing issues on a national level, but was also instrumental in several projects which are closer to my heart as they are located in Colorado.

Secretary Norton helped with the creation of our Nation's newest national park, The Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado. She also helped to create the largest Wildlife Refuge in Colorado, the 92,500 acre Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

Secretary Norton worked to help take the Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Rocky Flats and transform them from national defense sites to wildlife refuges.

As Gale steps down I am somewhat saddened. Her moving on signals the closing of one of the most productive chapters in the Department of Interior's history. But I am excited to see what new endeavors she will take on. In these new adventures I have no doubt that she will meet challenges head on and find the same success that she has seen as Secretary of Interior. I wish Secretary Norton all of the best in her new adventures. Thank you, Gale, for all your hard work.

STATE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION REPORT CARDS FOR 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, unfortunately the U.S. Congress is not addressing the issue of gun violence prevention, and several States have enacted laws which have made communities, and especially the children who live in them, less safe. Earlier this month, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence released its 9th annual Report Card on State Gun Violence Prevention Laws and highlighted the inadequacy of many state laws relating to gun safety.

Each year, the Brady Campaign report assigns individual states a grade of "A" through "F" on seven types of gun safety laws that protect children from gun violence. The Brady Campaign includes in its analysis such questions as: Is it illegal for a child to possess a gun without supervision? Is it illegal to sell a gun to a child? Are gun owners held responsible for leaving

loaded guns easily accessible to children? Are guns required to have child-safety locks, loaded-chamber indicators and other childproof designs? Do cities and counties have authority to enact local gun safety laws? Are background checks required at gun shows? And, is it legal to carry concealed handguns in public?

The grades assigned by the Brady Campaign show that State gun laws around the country continue to fall well short of what is needed to adequately protect children from gun violence. While six States received an "A," unchanged from last year, 32 states received a grade of "D" or "F," an increase of one. Only one State improved its grade from last year, while three others took actions that will make communities less safe from the threat of gun violence.

The Brady Campaign notes a few positive developments in State legislatures, including the consideration of state-level assault weapons bans by at least four states. Despite bipartisan support for its reauthorization, the 1994 Federal assault weapons ban was allowed to expire in 2004 due to inaction by the President and Republican leadership in the Congress.

Fortunately, the lack of Federal leadership on the assault weapons ban and several other gun safety issues has not discouraged citizens from working within their own communities and urging State legislatures to address the problems associated with gun violence. The Brady Campaign specifically recognized the importance of gun violence prevention advocates and leaders in several major cities, including Detroit, for their grassroots efforts. These efforts by local community leaders are needed now more than ever. Congress should take up and pass commonsense gun safety legislation to reauthorize and strengthen the assault weapons ban and help keep other dangerous firearms out of the hands of criminals and children.

WOMEN: BUILDERS OF COMMUNITIES AND DREAMS

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month during which we as a Nation reflect on the momentous contributions women have made over the course of American history. Throughout our history, women have played vital roles that have helped initiate and guide important social, economic and political change, which has helped to solidify the greatness and prosperity of this Nation. I also want to, in turn, acknowledge that, while great strides have been made, there are still many barriers to equality that must be overcome.

This year's theme for Women's History Month is Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams. This theme recognizes the efforts of women in laying the foundation for greater equality and in building and buttressing movements that have resulted in profound change.

Of course, the foundation of all of our lives begins with our own communities, homes and families. We must not forget to honor the contributions of the women closest to us in their roles as mothers, grandmothers, wives, sisters, daughters, friends, and mentors—who transform and nurture us on a daily basis. As mothers and grandmothers, women spend each and every day building healthy, educated, productive, and happy families.

Building families goes hand in hand with building communities and a better society as a whole. Women have been at the forefront of this Nation's major social movements. One example is Anne Hutchinson, who in 1637 was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony because her beliefs ran contrary to Puritan teachings. Her courageous stand in the face of persecution helped lay the groundwork for religious freedom as a right. Even when their own rights were severely restricted, women rose up to fight for the rights of others. During the abolitionist movement, the social reform movement, the labor movement, and the civil rights movement, women emerged as leaders in the drive to make our society fairer and better for all Americans. During the civil rights movement, courageous women such as Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, and Ella Baker helped break down the walls of racism and ensure that equal justice was had by all regardless of the color of their skin.

The State of Maryland has a rich history of such leaders, including Harriet Tubman, who courageously led a shackled people to freedom via the Underground Railroad; Margaret Brent, who became America's first woman lawyer and landholder; and Clara Barton, founder and first president of the American Red Cross. Likewise, equality in the field of medicine was facilitated with the aid of Mary Elizabeth Garret and Martha Carey Thomas, whose financial support led to the establishment of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, after it was promised that women would not be excluded from admission. We in Maryland are particularly proud of Senator Barbara Mikulski who is Maryland's first female Senator and has served longer than any other woman currently in the Senate. In fact, it was Senator MIKULSKI who sponsored legislation establishing National Women's History Week, the precursor to Woman's History Month, in 1981. Maryland is also the birthplace of another distinguished public servant, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, whose historic political career took root in the State of Maryland. Leader PELOSI, who hails from a legendary political family in Baltimore, is the first woman in our Nation's history to lead a major political party in Congress. And, in 2006, Maryland leads the country in the number of women serving in the State legislature.

Over the last 50 years, more women have entered the workforce and attained rights previously unavailable.