

Nation's economy, creating more than 75 percent of all new jobs and generating more than 50 percent of the Nation's gross domestic product;

Whereas small businesses are the Nation's innovators, advancing technology and productivity;

Whereas the Small Business Administration has been a critical partner in the success of the Nation's small businesses and in the growth of the Nation's economy;

Whereas the programs and services of the Small Business Administration have time and again proven their value, having helped to create or retain over 5,300,000 jobs in the United States since 1999;

Whereas the mission of the Small Business Administration is to maintain and strengthen the Nation's economy by aiding, counseling, assisting, and protecting the interests of small businesses and by helping families and businesses recover from natural disasters;

Whereas the Small Business Administration has helped small businesses access critical lending opportunities, protected small businesses from excessive Federal regulatory enforcement, played a key role in ensuring full and open competition for Government contracts, and improved the economic environment in which small businesses compete;

Whereas, for more than 50 years, the Small Business Administration has helped more than 23,000,000 Americans start, grow, and expand their businesses and has placed almost \$280,000,000,000 in loans and venture capital financing in the hands of entrepreneurs;

Whereas the Small Business Administration, established in 1953, has provided valuable service to small businesses through financial assistance, procurement assistance, business development, small business advocacy, and disaster recovery assistance;

Whereas the Small Business Administration has helped millions of entrepreneurs achieve the American dream of owning a small business, and has played a key role in fostering economic growth in underserved communities; and

Whereas the Small Business Administration will mark National Small Business Week, beginning April 9, 2006: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the entrepreneurial spirit of America's small businesses during the Small Business Administration's National Small Business Week, beginning April 9, 2006;

(2) supports the purpose and goals of National Small Business Week, and the ceremonies and events to be featured during the week;

(3) commends the Small Business Administration and the resource partners of the Small Business Administration for their work, which has been critical in helping the Nation's small businesses grow and develop; and

(4) applauds the achievements of small business owners and their employees, whose entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence has been a key player in the Nation's economic vitality.

LOCAL COMMUNITY RECOVERY ACT OF 2006

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4979 received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4979) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, to clarify the preference for local firms in the award of certain contracts for disaster relief activities.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 4979) was read the third time and passed.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Armed Services Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 85 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 85) honoring and congratulating the Minnesota National Guard, on its 150th anniversary, for its spirit of dedication and service to the State of Minnesota and the Nation and recognizing that the role of the National Guard, the Nation's citizen-soldier based militia, which was formed before the United States Army, has been and still is extremely important to the security and freedom of the Nation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the concurrent resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 85) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 85

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard traces its origins to the formation of the Pioneer Guard in the Minnesota territory in 1856, 2 years before Minnesota became the 32nd State in the Union;

Whereas the First Minnesota Infantry regiment was among the first militia regiments in the Nation to respond to President Lincoln's call for troops in April 1861 when it volunteered for 3 years of service during the Civil War;

Whereas during the Civil War the First Minnesota Infantry regiment saw battle at Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg;

Whereas during a critical moment in the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863, 262 soldiers of the First Minnesota Infantry, along with other Union forces, bravely charged and stopped Confederate troops attacking the

center of the Union position on Cemetery Ridge;

Whereas only 47 men answered the roll after this valiant charge, earning the First Minnesota Infantry the highest casualty rate of any unit in the Civil War;

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard was the first to volunteer for service in the Philippines and Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898, with enough men to form 3 regiments;

Whereas 1 of the 3 Minnesota regiments to report for duty in the War with Spain, the 13th Volunteer regiment, under the command of Major General Arthur MacArthur, saw among the heaviest fighting of the war in the battle of Manila and suffered more casualties than all other regiments combined during that key confrontation to free the Philippines;

Whereas after the cross-border raids of Pancho Villa and the attempted instigation of a war between the United States and Mexico, the border was secured in part by the Minnesota National Guard;

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard was mobilized for duty in World War I, where many Minnesotans saw duty in France, including the 151st Field Artillery, which saw duty as part of the famed 42nd "Rainbow" Division;

Whereas the first Air National Guard unit in the Nation was the 109th Observation Squadron of the Minnesota National Guard, which passed its muster inspection on January 17, 1921;

Whereas a tank company of the Minnesota National Guard from Brainerd, Minnesota, was shipped to the Philippines in 1941 to shore up American defenses against Japan as World War II neared;

Whereas these men from Brainerd fought hard and bravely as American forces were pushed into the Bataan Peninsula and ultimately endured the Bataan Death March;

Whereas men of the Minnesota National Guard's 175th Field Artillery, as part of the 34th "Red Bull" Division, became the first American Division to be deployed to Europe in January of 1942;

Whereas when the 34th Division was shipped to North Africa, it fired the first American shells against the Nazi forces;

Whereas the 34th Division participated in 6 major Army campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, which led to the division being credited with taking the most enemy-defended hills of any division in the European Theater as well as having more combat days than any other division in Europe;

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard served with distinction on the ground and in the air during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm;

Whereas Minnesota National Guard troops have helped keep the peace in the former Yugoslavia, including 1,100 troops who have seen service in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo;

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard has participated in keeping America safe after September 11, 2001, in numerous ways, including airport security;

Whereas the Duluth-based 148th Fighter Wing's F-16s flew patrols over cities after September 11, 2001, for a longer time than any other air defense unit;

Whereas over 11,000 members of the Minnesota National Guard have been called up for full-time service since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks;

Whereas as of March 20, 2006, Minnesota National Guard troops are serving in national defense missions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Iraq;

Whereas more than 600 Minnesota National Guard troops have been deployed to Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom;

Whereas members of the Minnesota National Guard, serving in the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division, have been a part of the State's largest troop deployment since World War II, with more than 2,600 citizen soldiers called to service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas the Minnesota National Guard has greatly contributed not only to battles but to the suppressing of violent riots, such as the 1947 national meat processors strike, in which they aided helpless police officers, and the fight against natural disasters such as the Red River flood in 1997 in which they organized search and rescue missions, helped shelter people who were left homeless, ran logistics, and helped sandbagging efforts; and

Whereas on April 17, 2006, the Minnesota National Guard will celebrate its 150th anniversary along with its historical and recent accomplishments: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) honors and congratulates the Minnesota National Guard for its spirit of dedication and service to the State of Minnesota and to the Nation on its 150th anniversary; and

(2) recognizes that the role of the National Guard, the Nation's citizen-soldier based militia, which was formed before the United States Army, has been and still is extremely important to the security and freedom of the Nation.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 371, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 371) honoring and congratulating the Minnesota National Guard on its 150th anniversary, for its spirit of dedication and service to the State of Minnesota and the Nation and recognizing that the role of the National Guard, the Nation's citizen-soldier based militia, which was formed before the United States Army, has been and still is extremely important to the security and freedom of the Nation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statement relating to the concurrent resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 371) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

YEAR OF THE MUSEUM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 437, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 437) supporting the goals and ideals of the Year of the Museum.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to support a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of the Year of the Museum. I am pleased to be joined by Senator KENNEDY and other members of the Cultural Caucus in sponsoring this resolution recognizing the vital role museums play in the fabric of our American culture.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the American Association of Museums, we treasure the more than 16,000 museums in the United States that house many of our greatest treasures. Museums inspire curiosity in students of all ages and foster a greater understanding of the world around us. Museums help us connect to the past and envision the future. Today, we celebrate their contribution to the vitality of our communities and our culture over the past 100 years.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, today the Senate considers The Year of the Museum resolution which asks for Congress to support the goals and ideals of the Year of the Museum and asks the President to call upon Americans to observe this year with appropriate programs and activities.

I encourage citizens to utilize and support their local museums which serve as a wonderful resource for communities. There is great value for citizens in the arts, historic collections and museums. They are a reflection of our culture and people, and are important to our history and national identity. Children and young learners benefit tremendously from art programs in the schools. These activities make for well rounded citizens, tomorrow's leaders. Museums play an important role in our lives.

The Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, which I chair, held a hearing on Federal funding of museums this week and found that Federal support of the arts and humanities, which includes museums, has increased 25 percent in the last 5 years. During a time of tremendous financial challenge, we must exercise thrift and frugality with taxpayer money.

Why not hold museum and arts funding steady at current levels? I believe that budget increases for nonessential activities during a time of great challenge to our Nation are indefensible. It is Congress that holds the purse strings and, frankly, we have been unwilling to make the tough decisions today for the future well-being of our grandchildren.

As a government we have spent over \$7 billion on such programs and institutions since 2001, but where in the Constitution does it allow the Federal

Government support museums and the arts by taxing citizens to pay for museums in other cities and States? Essentially taxpayers are being forced to subsidize museums they do not attend. Museums spend \$21 for every visitor while only earning \$5.50 in revenue per visitor according to the American Association of Museums.

I remind my colleagues that the current fiscal environment of war, Katrina and Social Security and Medicare insolvency is a very serious situation. One criticism of the President I have is that he has not asked the American people to sacrifice during wartime. We cannot, as a government, do everything we would like to do. I think the American people would be very forgiving and willing to make sacrifices if only asked. During a time of war Presidents Roosevelt and Truman slashed non-defense spending by over 20 percent. It can be done.

There are several opportunities for Federal funding of museums through competitive grants administered by the Institute for Museum and Library Services and the National Science Foundation which are peer reviewed and grantees are held accountable and must meet financial management requirements as well as other conditions.

Museum earmarks, however, proliferate, especially in the home States of members of the powerful Appropriations Committee. This year 69 percent of museum earmarks went to their home States. These museums get to cut in line and skip the competitive application. Favored projects receive money without having to compete with the other museums. These projects have not had to demonstrate their merit or worth to a community, but get a cash award nonetheless. There is something wrong with this system. What's more, several museums split their earmark requests across bills in the same year to hide the true cost. The same museums request earmarks every year, and get them. Since 2001, over 860 earmarks have been handed out to museums.

I support the ideals of the Year of the Museum, but I ask my colleagues to exercise fiscal restraint and stop focusing on political expediency and start thinking about future generations.

Given the local nature of most of the grants and earmarks, it is difficult to defend the expenditure of taxpayer dollars to benefit a small group of people in Muskogee, St. Louis, or Anchorage. If a community truly wanted such an institution or program, they would and should find a way to pay for it with local and State money, or through admission fees.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 437) was agreed to.