

to compete in a knowledge-based global economy. We have to have knowledge-based jobs if our people are going to work. This means we have to place more emphasis on careers in science, engineering, and math. Right now we are not getting the job done.

Globally, the United States ranks 17th in the proportion of the college-age population earning science and engineering degrees, down from third place several decades ago. In fact, the percentage of 24-year-olds with science or engineering degrees is now higher in many industrialized nations. Countries such as England, South Korea, Germany, Australia, Singapore, Japan, and Canada all produce a higher percentage of science and engineering graduates than we.

The National Academy of Sciences released a report this fall, entitled "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," that recommends action the Federal Government should take to enhance our ability to compete in a global marketplace. The recommendations range from those that will improve our Nation's math and science course work and establish a workforce of qualified teachers who will prepare our students for futures in highly innovative careers to the critical need for energy independence and investment in research. It is hard for me to believe the statistics that came out of the report. Half the teachers who teach math and science today are not qualified to teach the subjects.

I did a survey of our State universities to find out how many people graduated to teach physics. Thirteen was the number. How in the world can we keep going with that kind of record?

I am encouraged that the President recognized that America needs to wake up and build a new infrastructure for competitiveness, and I applaud his American competitiveness agenda. Also, I joined a number of my colleagues as an original cosponsor of the Protecting America's Competitive Edge Act, or PACE. This legislation is aimed at improving our Nation's competitiveness through advancement and emphasis on math and science education. Like the President's initiative, this legislation is comprehensive and it is aimed to increase our Nation's research capacities and emphasize strong science and math education. However, it will require a larger national commitment to reengage our Nation's youth in science and math, similar to our response in the late 1950s to Russia's launch of Sputnik and the ensuing space race.

Here the President's budget falls far short of what is necessary to fulfill the recommendations of the report. In other words, if we are going to really do something about this crisis that we have in terms of math and science, we are going to have to fund the recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences. The only thing that is being funded right now in the Presi-

dent's competitiveness agenda is re-training of teachers in high school, making the research and development credit permanent, and doing some work in research that will help us deal with our energy crisis. The portion of the report that talks about scholarships from the Department of Energy is not funded. The report calls for 25,000 scholarships out of the Department of Energy at \$20,000 a year to encourage people to study engineering.

It also provides out of the Department of Education \$20,000 a year for students to take math, science, information technology, and education courses. And they commit that after 5 years they will teach for 5 years. In other words, they will get their undergraduate degree and teach for 5 years. During those 5 years, the National Science Foundation will pay them \$10,000 more than what the local school district pays them. So it is a real comprehensive effort to deal with the crisis that we have today in terms of providing the scientists we need to get the job done.

The bottom line is, we don't need less revenue; we need more revenue. As a Wall Street Journal article states:

Federal taxes amounted to 17.5 percent of gross domestic product, up from a modern low of 16.3 percent in 2004.

That is one of the reasons the debt has gone up so much, like a rocket. It is because in 2004, we were only taking in 16.3 percent of our GDP in revenue. But it was well below the high of 21 percent that we had in 2000. That was too much.

Continuing from the Wall Street Journal:

Keeping the tax burden low is going to be difficult. Last year, the federal government's spending exceeded its tax take by about \$318 billion. And the retirement of the baby-boom generation starting in 2011 could cause spending on big-ticket federal retirement programs to jump.

That is the quote from the Wall Street Journal. The only thing that bothers me about the quote is that they reported the debt last year of \$318 billion. That is what they reported. The fact is, from an accrual basis—it comes out of the Department of the Treasury—we increased the debt by \$740 billion. But we only report to the American people \$318 billion. Several weeks ago, we were talking about the fact that the Treasury announced that on an accrual basis we increased our debt by that amount of money. Someone said, why don't we keep our books on the accrual basis? Somebody said, for goodness sakes, we cannot do that because they will find out how much in debt we are and how much our budgets are not balanced.

So I think that with the baby boom generation starting to retire in 2011, we will have some real problems. The simple fact is we cannot have it all. We need to set priorities and make hard choices; otherwise, our children will end up paying for it. Our forefathers recognized the inequity of passing on

debt to future generations. George Washington in his Farewell Address stated:

[Avoid] the accumulation of debt, not only by shutting occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear.

Again, he said "not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear."

I have to say this, and I know it is controversial, but if you look at the extraordinary costs that we had with the war and homeland security and Katrina, the logical thing that one would think about is to ask for a temporary tax increase to pay for them. Did you hear that? Ask for a temporary tax to pay for it, instead of saying we will let our kids take care of it; we will let our grandchildren take care of it. No, we are not doing it. The people who are sacrificing today in this country are the ones who have lost men and women in our wars. The people who have sacrificed today are the ones who have come back without their arms and legs—thousands of them. They are making the sacrifice.

The question I ask is, what sacrifice are we making?

Anyone in the know who is watching us has to wonder about our character, our intellectual honesty, our concern about our national security, our Nation's competitiveness in the global marketplace now and in the future and, last but not least, our don't-give-a-darn attitude about the standard of living and quality of life of our children and grandchildren.

The question is, are we willing to be honest with ourselves and the American people and make these tough decisions? My two models when I was mayor and Governor were "together we can do it," and our State motto, "With God All Things Are Possible."

I am prayerful that the Holy Spirit will inspire us to make those tough decisions and do what is right for our country.

I yield the floor.

GUN TRAFFICKING: A NATIONAL ISSUE REQUIRING NATIONAL ATTENTION

MR. LEVIN. Mr. President, last Tuesday, 15 mayors from a diverse group of cities around the country gathered in New York City for a mayors' summit on illegal guns. This summit provided an excellent opportunity to share gun violence prevention strategies, engage experts, and coordinate future national outreach and lobbying efforts for the safety of their cities. I commend those who participated for their willingness to work together to address the gun violence issues that plague communities across our country.

One of the major issues discussed by the mayors last week was the buying and selling of guns by "straw purchasers." Straw purchasers play a critical role in the illegal trafficking of

guns by purchasing with the intention of reselling them to prohibited buyers. These straw purchases are often made in States with lax gun safety laws and trafficked to cities where they may later be used in violent crimes. New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly refers to this as the “iron pipeline” of illegal firearms. According to published reports citing New York Police Department statistics, 8 of every 10 guns used in crimes in New York City come from other States. In fact, only 18 percent of the illegal guns recovered in New York City in 2005 were originally sold in New York State, while 61 percent were traced to just five other States.

According to several of the mayors in attendance, the lack of leadership by the President and Congress on the issue of illegal gun trafficking was the impetus for the summit. As New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg pointed out, “There’s very little that an individual city can do to halt the sale of guns to criminals. This is a national issue that requires national attention.” In the absence of adequate Federal attention, the 15 attending mayors signed a statement of principles resolving, among other things, to work together in the prosecution of gun traffickers, irresponsible gun dealers, and violent criminals.

In their statement of principles, the mayors vow to oppose all Federal efforts to restrict the ability of cities to access, use, and share firearms trace data that can be critical to law enforcement personnel working to stop the flow of guns from reckless gun dealers into the hands of criminals. This statement refers to amendments that have been inserted in the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Act each of the last 4 years that prohibit the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, ATF, from disclosing important information from the national Firearms Trace System Database to local law enforcement and government officials. Unfortunately, legislation has recently been introduced in the House of Representatives which would make these restrictions on ATF firearms trace data permanent.

It is time that Congress work with, instead of against, our Nation’s mayors to solve the gun violence issues which our communities face. The mayors are right. The gun violence epidemic across the country requires national attention, and I urge my colleagues to join me in working to enact common-sense gun safety laws that will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this statement of principles be printed in the RECORD.

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

MAYORS’ SUMMIT ON ILLEGAL GUNS

Whereas: 30,000 Americans across the country are killed every year as a result of gun violence, destroying families and communities in big cities and small towns; and

Whereas: As Mayors, we are duty-bound to do everything in our power to protect our residents, especially our children, from harm and there is no greater threat to public safety than the threat of illegal guns;

Now, therefore, we resolve to work together to find innovative new ways to advance the following principles:

Punish to the maximum extent of the law—criminals who possess, use, and traffic in illegal guns.

Target and hold accountable irresponsible gun dealers who break the law by knowingly selling guns to straw purchasers.

Oppose all federal efforts to restrict cities’ right to access, use, and share trace data that is so essential to effective enforcement, or to interfere with the ability of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to combat illegal gun trafficking.

Work to develop and use technologies that aid in the detection and tracing of illegal guns.

Support all local, state, and federal legislation that targets illegal guns; coordinate legislative, enforcement, and litigation strategies; and share information and best practices.

Invite other cities to join us in this new national effort.

IN CELEBRATION OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

Please join me as we celebrate the outstanding contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to our Nation during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Since 1977, when Congressman Norman Mineta of San Jose, along with Senators DANIEL INOUYE and Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii, introduced a joint congressional resolution, we have celebrated Asian Pacific American—APA—cultures and traditions each May. They chose May for the observance because the first Japanese settlers had come to mainland America in May 1843, and the Nation’s first transcontinental railroad was completed, with the help of Chinese American labor, in May 1869. This year, the theme is “Celebrating Decades of Pride, Partnerships and Progress.”

More than 14 million APAs live in the United States. Nearly 5 million APAs live in California, making it home to the largest population of Asian Pacific Americans in the Nation. It is no wonder, then, that the APA community in California has made tremendous strides by working together to bring about positive change and growth. I am so proud of my State of California for being a leader on Asian Pacific American issues.

Earlier this year, the California State Legislature’s Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus held its 6th Annual APA Legislative Briefing, “Partnering for Community Empowerment.” The conference brought together statewide APA community leaders—from organizations such as the Asian Pacific Islanders California Action Network, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, and Asian

Americans for Civil Rights and Equality—to create unique partnerships to advance civil rights, education, health care and community development. I commend the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus and California’s APA community leaders for their tireless and innovative efforts to empower Asian Pacific Americans in California.

In addition to reflecting on the many accomplishments of the APA community, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month also allows us to honor the memory and contributions of notable Asian Pacific Americans. This year, sadly, we have lost many APA leaders: Dave Tatsuno, a courageous man who secretly documented life in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II; Sam Chu Lin, one of the first Asian American journalists in the United States; Judge Delbert Wong, the first Chinese American judge in the continental United States; and Jade Snow Wong, a world-renowned author and ceramicist.

All four of these APA leaders were undeterred in their efforts to make America a better place to live, and they will be missed by all who knew them. In remembering the accomplishments of Dave Tatsuno, Sam Chu Lin, Judge Delbert Wong, and Jade Snow Wong, I hope that future APAs will be inspired to become leaders who will fight for this great Nation and for the rights of all Asian Pacific Americans.

As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month this May, let us remember that Asian Pacific Americans are constantly contributing to every aspect of American life, from business and government to sports, science, and the arts. As we note their many contributions, let us celebrate diversity and recommit ourselves to working together toward a better future for us all.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this month marks the anniversary of two milestones in Asian Pacific American history.

The first-ever Japanese Americans made their home in this country starting on May 7, 1843. And in this same month in 1869, the Transcontinental Railroad, which had a tremendous impact on settling the West, was completed largely due to the hard labor of hundreds of Chinese Americans.

These landmarks in Asian Pacific American history inspired Congress in 1977 to pass legislation establishing a week in May as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. In 1990, it was expanded into a month-long observation.

So this May, in recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, I honor the diverse cultures and heritages that make up the Asian and Pacific Islander American communities in my own home State of Maryland and across the Nation. I recognize the adversity and discrimination so many have faced and continue to face in America, and I vow to continue to fight