

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

to make sure all Asian Pacific Americans receive the equality they deserve in all aspects of their lives.

Asian and Pacific Islander American communities come from all different countries of origin from China, Japan, Laos and the Philippines to Pakistan, Vietnam, Korea, and many others. They have brought with them unique cultural traditions, religions and languages. And they make major contributions to all facets of our society from small businesses to giant corporations, from the government to the front lines of battlefields, schools, athletics, law firms, hospitals, and countless other arenas. For centuries, they have helped make America what it is today, and they continue to be an integral part of the diverse American tapestry.

That is why I support comprehensive immigration reform and accessible, efficient immigration services to keep our borders open to the immigrants that continue to make their homes in America and contribute to our culture and economy.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is a reminder of the contributions this community makes to our society all year round. I will continue to fight in the Senate for the needs of the millions of Asian Pacific Americans that have made their home in this country.

THE HAMILTON PROJECT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, America has never lacked challenges, nor has it lacked the determination and ingenuity to resolve them.

In our Nation's very first hours, we faced stark realities. Revolutionary War debts put the Treasury \$79 million in the red. States could not retire their debt. Our young Nation had no public credit. We also had no source of revenue—much less a means to collect it. And many Americans were as indebted as their Government. The future held promise, but the present was bleak.

America's first Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton, embraced these challenges. The day after his appointment—a Saturday—he put in motion a plan to get our economy on its feet. In his first weeks, he created a customs service to generate income, established a rudimentary coast guard for enforcement, and laid the foundation for fruitful trade relations with Britain.

These first weeks in office proved Hamilton a man of action. The years that followed showed him a man of vision. The Treasury Secretary authored the legendary Report on Public Credit, the blueprint for America's fiscal system. Not without controversy, his plan consolidated debt and issued new bonds. He raised taxes and set up a national central bank. The legacy of Hamilton's plan endures today.

Hamilton's action and vision launched our Nation's early prosperity. But today, we again face mounting challenges.

Using accrual accounting, the 2005 Financial Report of the United States Government reported that the Government is running a net operating deficit of \$760 billion—more than 6 percent of our economy. Our foreign debt to GDP ratio has not been this high since Grover Cleveland was President in the late 19th century.

We face the largest current account deficit in history—more than \$800 billion. A rising China and India are testing our innovative capacity and the robustness of our manufacturing sector.

We are also neglecting education and the young minds that will define our future successes. We have forgotten our research institutions that generate ideas and spur innovation. We are abandoning the basic infrastructure that buttresses our economic growth. We have let health care become a burden rather than an asset. We have emptied our saving accounts and neglected investment.

Like newly independent America, the United States today demands vision and action.

I have put forward a comprehensive competitiveness initiative to address these challenges. I have introduced trade competitiveness legislation to make sure our trading partners play by the rules and give our companies and workers a fair shot at success. I have introduced energy competitiveness legislation to promote innovation and research and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

I have also proposed savings competitiveness legislation to close the fiscal gap and encourage Americans to save. Savings boosts investment and innovation. This week I will introduce legislation to boost innovation by revamping and making permanent the R&D tax credit. In the coming weeks, I will introduce ambitious legislation on education, health care, and international tax competitiveness.

But I do not pretend to have all of the answers. That is why today I would like to recognize another initiative that embraces these competitiveness challenges. It is an initiative that invokes the vision and action of Alexander Hamilton. This namesake initiative—the Hamilton Project—led by some of America's brightest minds, is clear in its vision and bold in the action it promises.

Based on principles—not politics—the Hamilton Project recognizes that broad-based economic growth in America is stronger and more sustainable than growth that accrues to a small segment of the population. The Hamilton Project recognizes that our Nation can pursue economic security for American workers and economic growth simultaneously—and that both can be mutually reinforcing. The Hamilton Project recognizes that effective government plays a critical role in facilitating our Nation's prosperity and enhancing economic growth.

These principles inform four pillars of action: education and work, innova-

tion and infrastructure, savings and insurance, and effective government. Under each pillar, the project promises innovative ideas and a clear blueprint to realize them. Already, the project has proposed reducing the skills gap of underprivileged school children and improving the effectiveness of our teachers. They have put forward clear proposals to boost savings in America and simplify taxes for the majority of Americans.

In the coming months, the Hamilton Project will continue to roll out specific policy proposals in each pillar. The project's work so far promises clear-eyed, detailed plans for our most pressing challenges. I look forward to evaluating each proposal. I recommend that my colleagues take the time to do the same.

Once again, I applaud those at the Hamilton Project for their initiative. Our challenges may be daunting, but we must all welcome the challenge.

Upon accepting his nomination as Treasury Secretary centuries ago, Hamilton understood the hugeness of his task, saying: "I conceived myself to be under an obligation to lend my aid towards putting the machine in some regular motion." Let us follow his lead. And let us lend our aid, and keep this great machine in motion.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Executive Summary of the Hamilton Project's strategy paper.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We believe in America's promise: that education and hard work can provide each individual with the opportunity to advance and allow each generation to do better than the one before. Today, however, that promise is in jeopardy because our nation is neither paying its way nor investing adequately in its future. Our nation has failed to make the tough decisions required to advance opportunity, prosperity, and growth over the years and decades ahead.

The Hamilton Project's economic strategy reflects a judgment that long-term prosperity is best achieved by making economic growth broad-based, by enhancing individual economic security, and by embracing a role for effective government in making needed public investments. The Project's strategy—strikingly different from the theories driving current economic policy—calls for fiscal discipline and for increased public investment in key growth-enhancing areas. The Project will put forward innovative policy ideas from leading economic thinkers throughout the United States—ideas based on experience and evidence, not ideology and doctrine—to introduce new, sometimes controversial, policy options into the national debate with the goal of improving our country's economic policy.

Many options for addressing the fiscal problem have been identified; the most pressing need now is not new ideas, but greater political will and a bipartisan political process. The president and the leaders of both parties in both houses need to come together in a special process that recognizes the critical importance of these issues, acknowledges differences in views, and works to reach common ground with joint political accountability.