

threats we face and properly prioritizes homeland security.

IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION ACT

Mr. KOHL. Madam President, I wish to discuss several provisions in the conference bill, H.R. 1, Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007. As chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, I wish to thank Senators LIEBERMAN, COLLINS, DODD, and SHELBY for working with me and my staff on provisions that will protect seniors in the event of an emergency or disaster.

It has been nearly 2 years since our Nation reeled from the tragic and shameful images of seniors abandoned during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Sadly, we now know that 71 percent of the people who died were older than 60. Last year, the Special Committee on Aging held a hearing to examine how prepared the Nation is to care for our seniors in the event of a national emergency. What we learned was disheartening.

We learned that our Nation is woefully unprepared to meet the unique needs of our seniors in the event of a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other emergency. Cookie-cutter emergency plans are of little use to seniors, especially those who depend on others for assistance in their daily lives. We need specific plans, programs, and information for all seniors facing emergencies.

That is why I teamed up with Senator COLEMAN to continue to work with the committees of jurisdiction to ensure that the Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation place seniors on the forefront of their emergency planning agenda. These provisions are an important step toward ensuring that seniors are not overlooked but are protected when the next national emergency occurs.

I thank Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS again for working with us to include two important provisions in titles I and IV that will address emergency preparedness and planning for older individuals.

The first provision we have successfully included amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to ensure that as State, local, and tribal governments develop their mass-evacuation plans they include specific procedures to inform the elderly before and during an evacuation. This will send a strong signal to States and communities that are engaged in emergency planning that seniors must be a priority and cannot be forgotten or ignored during mass evacuations. This will also assist older individuals and their families in appropriately preparing for an evacuation during an emergency or other disaster.

The second provision we have included amends the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 to ensure that the National Exercise

Program is designed to address the unique needs of older individuals. The National Exercise Program was originally created to test and evaluate our Nation's level of preparedness and capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from national disasters. Such testing and evaluation will allow emergency management entities to effectively identify, assess, and improve vulnerabilities at the State, local, and tribal levels. This provision will keep older individuals on the forefront of national emergency planning.

I thank Chairman DODD and Ranking Member SHELBY again for working with us to successfully include and expand upon our original provision in title XIV, supported by the American Public Health Association, which would ensure that public transportation workers and other related employees are trained to meet the evacuation needs of seniors in the event of a crisis. The Secretary of Homeland Security will establish a program to conduct security exercises, which will be scaled to meet the needs of specific transportation systems and must take into account the needs of seniors who utilize those systems. Additionally, another provision in this title will ensure that transportation agencies receiving grant funding in high-risk areas have mandatory security plans in place that must include appropriate evacuation and communication measures for the elderly as a component of each agency's plan. Both provisions are particularly important since so many of our seniors utilize public transportation for access to their everyday needs. Furthermore, only public transportation has the capacity to move millions of people and provide first responders with critical support in major evacuations of urban areas.

Mr. President, these four provisions will go a long way in ensuring that our seniors are taken care of if we have another national emergency or disaster. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught us many painful lessons that should never be forgotten. I will not forget, and I intend to pursue additional legislation aimed at explicitly safeguarding the needs of America's seniors in the event of an emergency. The time to act to protect our seniors is now.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I want to add my thoughts to the debate on the conference report accompanying the Improving America's Security Act of 2007.

First, I want to preface my remarks by applauding the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for their work on this important bill. This bill makes crucial and long overdue improvements in transportation security, critical infrastructure protection and emergency response capabilities. There is no higher priority than protecting homeland security and this bill is a key component in that effort.

I am particularly pleased that the Federal Agency Data Mining Reporting

Act is included in this bill as Section 804. I have been working on this legislation for a number of years with Senator SUNUNU, Senator LEAHY, and Senator AKAKA. Many law-abiding Americans are understandably concerned about the specter of secret government programs analyzing vast quantities of public and private data about their pursuits, in search of patterns of suspicious activity. Four years after we first learned about the Defense Department's program called Total Information Awareness, there is still much Congress does not know about the Federal Government's work on data mining. This bill is an important step in allowing Congress to conduct oversight of any such programs or related research development efforts.

I supported the provision in the Senate bill which mandates the declassification of the aggregate amount of the intelligence budget. It is unfortunate that this provision was watered down during the conference process to permit the President to waive this requirement if the disclosure of this information would harm national security. The 9/11 Commission found that "when even aggregate categorical numbers remain hidden it is hard to judge priorities and foster accountability." I concur with the Commission, that aggregate budget figures "provid[e] little insight into U.S. intelligence sources and methods." Sharing this information with the American people will provide a greater level of transparency and accountability and in the end make us more secure.

I am pleased that this bill includes provisions to ensure proper oversight of homeland security grants. The bill requires regular auditing of homeland security grant funds to ensure that they funds are spent appropriately and effectively. I will continue to work with my colleagues to improve oversight of homeland security funding.

The conference report also includes important nonproliferation provisions. It would establish a Presidential coordinator for the prevention of WMD proliferation and terrorism. Currently, there is no point person in the Federal Government in charge of coordinating nonproliferation initiatives and efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism. We face a variety of worldwide terrorist threats. One of the most serious of those threats is the possibility that terrorists could smuggle fissile materials into the United States. This provision is an important contribution to our efforts to secure these materials and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

I must note that one provision of this bill troubles me greatly. That is the so-called John Doe provision concerning immunity for citizens making tips of possible terrorist threats and government officials acting on those tips. This provision was not in the bill that was passed in the Senate, nor was it in the bill that passed the House. It was apparently inspired by a lawsuit filed

after six Muslim imams were told to get off a plane they had boarded in Minneapolis, but the Judiciary Committee never had the opportunity to study it or perfect it. Regardless of its merit, this provision should have received more careful consideration by the Senate. I am deeply concerned that as written this provision appears to endorse racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. The best way to prevent terrorism is through solid law enforcement and intelligence work, not through scare tactics or racial profiling.

I voted for this bill because it makes key changes to address security needs. However, our Nation's vulnerabilities demand more and I will continue to work to ensure that our vital homeland security needs are met.

RETIREMENT OF PAUL CULLINAN

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, as chairman of the Budget Committee, and along with my colleague, Senator GREGG, the ranking member, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the expert assistance that the Congress has received from Paul Cullinan during his time at the Congressional Budget Office. Paul is retiring from congressional service in August, and this institution will sorely miss him.

Dr. Cullinan arrived at CBO in 1981, and has contributed to a vast range of policy analyses, budget projections, and legislative cost estimates over the past 26 years. But more important than the amount and variety of such work is the consistently high quality of that work and Paul's continual dedication to providing the Congress with thorough and timely analysis.

For the past 13 years, Paul Cullinan has served as the unit chief of CBO's Human Resources Cost Estimates Unit. He excelled in that role, and his service there allowed CBO to provide critical support to consideration of many varied pieces of legislation, including: efforts to reauthorize and extend higher education programs and the food stamps program, potential changes to Social Security, proposals to reform U.S. immigration policies, and changes to a host of income security programs. Moreover, Paul has been a key contributor to and coordinator of CBO's work on long-term budget projections, which we have come to consider more as we move toward the pending retirement of the baby-boom generation.

In addition to his superb analysis of legislative proposals, Paul has provided constant and wise support to the Budget Committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. In short, there are only a handful of true first-tier budget experts here on Capitol Hill, and Paul Cullinan is clearly in the top ranks of that small group—we will miss his input, careful judgment, and dedication to providing the best budgetary information possible for congressional consideration.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I join with Senator CONRAD in recognizing

Paul Cullinan of the Congressional Budget Office. Paul's leadership, extremely dedicated work, and the products of his unit have been essential to understanding entitlement programs and the long-term fiscal condition of the United States. Paul has served CBO Directors and Budget Committee Members of the House and Senate with distinction. He represents the type of dedicated public servants whom we are fortunate to have at the CBO.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. WARNER. Madam. President, today I rise in support of the Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act which was introduced on July 25. I am pleased to join my colleagues Senators EDWARD M. KENNEDY, OLYMPIA J. SNOWE, JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, and MARIA CANTWELL to introduce this bipartisan proposal which seeks to encourage States to modernize their unemployment insurance systems. The Unemployment Insurance Modernization Act would make \$7 billion in incentive payments available to States to encourage them to expand eligibility for benefits and provide training to workers struggling with long-term unemployment.

The unemployment insurance, UI, program must be reformed to address fundamental shifts in the economy. The UI system provides needed benefits to millions of U.S. workers each year. But the system needs to be updated to better assist today's more highly mobile workforce and long-term unemployed workers left behind by declining industries. Today, many unemployed workers do not qualify for benefits because their most recent work is not taken into account. Others exhaust their benefits before finding work, joining 1.1 million long-term unemployed workers and an additional 1.5 million discouraged job-seekers struggling to get by. For these reasons, only 35 percent of unemployed workers currently collect unemployment benefits.

The UI Modernization Act sets aside \$7 billion from tax receipts authorized under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act, FUTA, to provide incentive payments to encourage States to update their UI systems. The bill rewards states for: (1) removing barriers that block coverage for low-wage and part-time workers; (2) ensuring a more family-friendly UI system; and (3) helping dislocated workers increase their skills. It also provides \$500 million in funding to States to improve the administration of their unemployment compensation systems. These administrative payments are fully paid for from the existing UI trust fund.

The UI Modernization Act would give States the resources and flexibility they need to pass important reforms. Each State would have a chance to receive a share of the \$7 billion set aside for incentive payments. To receive one-third of its allotted funds, a State must

adopt an "alternative base period" allowing workers to meet eligibility requirements by counting their most recent wages. This makes the system—which has traditionally relied on wage data that is up to 6 months old more accurate and helps workers who have recently satisfied earnings requirements to collect the benefits they deserve. States that have already adopted such a system would also receive these incentive payments.

States will receive the additional two-thirds of their share of funds if they adopt or have adopted two of the following reforms that benefit workers: (1) provide unemployment compensation for workers who have voluntarily left their jobs due to the illness or disability of an immediate family member, the relocation of a spouse for employment, or domestic violence; (2) provide training benefits to unemployed workers laid off from a "declining" occupation who are enrolled in a State-approved training program for entry into a high-demand occupation; (3) provide unemployment compensation benefits to individuals seeking part-time work; (4) raise maximum compensation caps so that all long-term unemployed workers can receive a full 26 weeks of benefits; or (5) pay unemployed workers at least an extra \$15 per week for each of the worker's dependents.

Mr. President, in periods of unemployment, workers need a sound program of training and benefits to find new and rewarding opportunities. This bill will provide important resources to States like Virginia, as they improve their programs to help workers and their families in times of need.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, despite the outcry for change in the wake of the deadliest shooting rampage in our Nation's history, too many schools continue to be plagued by gun violence. True prevention requires reducing the likelihood of death or injury before an incident occurs. Unfortunately, we have still not done enough to prevent dangerous guns from falling into the hands of those who may intentionally or unintentionally use them to harm themselves or others.

Earlier this month, a group of engineering students at Kettering University, in Flint, MI, gathered in an apartment to celebrate the beginning of their 3-month job co-ops, part of their degree requirements. One of the students stumbled across a 9mm handgun lying on a dresser in one of the apartment's bedrooms. He picked up the weapon, and, after seeing himself in a mirror, made a sudden spin move with it. As he spun around, the gun accidentally discharged. Karl Joseph Hansen, 21 years old and asleep at the time, died of a single gunshot wound to the head.

Because a loaded handgun was present in an otherwise unremarkable