

outcomes in countries around the world.

We cannot underestimate the importance of efforts by our Government and its partners around the globe to provide access to education for girls and boys around the world. Basic education is the cornerstone for success in sustainable development. It has a profound impact on the future of individual children, their families, communities, and nations.

A population that can read, write, and think critically is far more likely to achieve democracy, economic growth, and improved health. A 2004 report by Barbara Herz and Gene Sperling from the Center on Universal Education at the Council on Foreign Relations detailed the benefits that result from investments in education, particular for girls and women. A single year of primary education correlates with a 10 to 20 percent increase in women's wages later in life, and a study of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa found that from 1960 to 1992, equality in education between men and women could have led to nearly 1 percent higher annual per capita GDP growth.

Nor is there any doubt that education saves lives. Educated children are less likely to contract HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. Oxfam estimates that if all children completed primary education, 700,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS in young people could be prevented each year, totaling 7 million cases in a decade.

I would like to commend the Senate for its efforts to significantly increase U.S. investments in basic education in the developing world. Over the last 15 to 20 years, there has been dramatic progress, particularly for girls, in school enrollment around the world.

In 2000, our Nation made a commitment to the goal of achieving universal basic education by 2015. Through some of the initiatives and partnership in which our Government is participating with its international partners, such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, we have made progress. Since the Fast Track Initiative was launched in 2002, approximately 4 million children each year—both boys and girls—have gained access to school.

But much more needs to be done. We are not on track to meet our 2015 goal. In order to do so, we would need to help millions more children enter school each year requiring a global financial commitment of more than \$7 billion every year. Of the 77 million children who are not in school, three-fifths are girls. Forty-three percent of all out-of-school children are in countries affected by conflict and are often the hardest to reach. Approximately half of the school-age children who start primary school do not complete it. And there are hundreds of millions more children who are denied the opportunity to complete a secondary school education to become the next generation of doctors, nurses, lawyers, sci-

entists, and teachers. These statistics represent an unconscionable misuse of human potential—a misuse that we can and must remedy.

I have introduced legislation—the Education for All Act—that would enable the U.S. Government to make a significant commitment to reach the 2015 goal and help children in developing countries, particularly areas experiencing conflict or humanitarian emergencies, have access to a quality basic education. But I would also encourage my colleagues to support increased appropriations for basic education programs, and as this legislation moves forward, I will work with my colleagues to ensure that the United States is in the strongest position to meet its 2015 goal and make education for all a reality. This is not only the right thing to do for the world's children; it is right thing and the smart thing to do for this country. ●

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION ACT

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am pleased to support the fiscal year 2008 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriation Act. The bill includes funding for critical renovations and repairs to military facilities and military family housing. The brave men and women of our Armed Forces are serving honorably under intense strains in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We must take care of them and their families while they serve and when they return. This bill reverses a disturbing trend in recent years by finally providing sufficient funds to care for our Nation's veterans. I hope that we will have the chance soon to vote for a conference report reflecting the priorities in this bill so that there will be no delay—as there has been in recent years—in getting the Department of Veterans Affairs urgently needed funds. And I will continue working to make sure that this bill is only the beginning of a lasting commitment to providing veterans the best health care and benefits available.

I was particularly pleased that the Senate adopted my amendment requiring that the Government Accountability Office, GAO, study how the VA can best care for the mental health needs of female veterans. I decided to introduce this amendment after hearing concerns directly from Wisconsin veterans about insufficient mental health services for women. The number of women in the Armed Forces has grown rapidly, as has their exposure to combat. While the VA has taken important steps to establish services for women, there is little data on how VA mental health care funds are being used to address the needs of women. Indeed, mental health experts recently testified before the Congress that the VA does not have the capacity to address the needs of women veterans.

This study will help ensure that the Veterans Administration dedicates the funds needed to care for women veterans.

I was pleased to support Senator BROWN's amendment to ensure that the Veterans Administration abides by existing law which prohibits unnecessary studies on the privatization of VA functions and requires public-private competitions before outsourcing government jobs. This bill also includes additional funds for the Beneficiary Travel Program, an important VA program that benefits numerous Wisconsin veterans who live far from VA medical facilities.

The bill includes \$15 million for funding for gulf war illnesses research. I strongly support research into treatments for these debilitating illnesses. Nearly 200,000 gulf war veterans—one in four of those who served—suffer from chronic multisymptom illness as a result of serving in the gulf, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs most recent study. These illnesses combine debilitating headaches, widespread muscle and joint pain, severe fatigue, cognitive problems, and other abnormalities. Current and future American military forces, as well as civilians, are also at risk of similar exposure.

Yet according to members of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses, of all the money spent on research in this area—over \$300 million over the past 12 years—only two studies have been done on treatments. It is time to accept that these are serious neurological illnesses and shift research to the identification of treatments. A promising pilot program to identify treatments and diagnostic tests was initiated last year by the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program. I call on the Department to dedicate the funds appropriated in this act to the identification of treatments for these illnesses.

I understand that concerns have been expressed about the Veterans Administration leasing property at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Facility to private enterprises that are inappropriate for the hallowed grounds of a soldier's home. I supported Senator DEMINT's unsuccessful amendment to delete language from the bill prohibiting the VA from leasing excess property at the West Los Angeles medical facility under any circumstances because I do not believe that this language is in the best interests of veterans.

The GAO has reported that, historically, the VA has spent as many as 1 in 4 of its health care dollars on maintaining its facilities and land, including properties that are no longer fit for the provision of medical services and are no longer in use. In order to better capitalize on its assets, the VA has conducted a nationwide review and prepared a plan to make the best use of its property. This plan is supported by a

broad coalition of veterans service organizations, and Congress should take care before carving out exceptions to this policy. This does not mean, however, that just any lease will do. The VA must incorporate the views of local veterans groups whenever it makes decisions about how to utilize its property and any lease must preserve the integrity of the VA grounds.

This bill includes over \$1 billion for National Guard and Reserve construction. For too long, the needs of the National Guard and Reserve have not been adequately funded even while their responsibilities at home and abroad have grown exponentially. This bill increases funds for the National Guard and Reserve commensurate with their growing responsibilities.

I am concerned that the Department of Defense, according to the report of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has "yet to provide a comprehensive plan detailing the scope and cost of the total military construction requirement" associated with the increase in end strength of the Army and Marine Corps. Nor has the Defense Department properly accounted for the tremendous increase in the cost of realigning its force structure. And I am concerned that the Defense Department is proceeding with major new construction at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti even before the new AFRICOM commander has been confirmed, thereby undermining the stated goal of creating a more cohesive and coordinated approach to security in Africa. As chairman of the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am committed to ongoing oversight of the role of our Armed Forces in the overall U.S. strategy towards the African continent.

In conclusion, I am pleased that the Senate voted today to support the needs of members of the Armed Forces, the Reserves, veterans and their families. They have served our Nation selflessly and deserve our enduring support.

RETIREMENT OF ALEXIS T. LUM

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a great American and a remarkable man, who has an exceptional record of public service. He has honorably served our country with distinction for over 43 years of active duty and National Guard Service, as well as 16 years of service as my executive assistant.

GEN Alexis Lum retired in February 1991 as the adjutant general for the State of Hawaii Army National Guard. His military service began in 1945, when he was drafted shortly after graduating from Roosevelt High School in Honolulu. He served as an enlisted man in the Pacific, attaining the rank of staff sergeant. When discharged in 1947, he became a student at the University of Hawaii where he received his bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and a ROTC commission as a second lieutenant.

He was recalled to active duty in April 1951 for the Korean conflict and served as an infantry platoon leader. Released from active duty in 1954, he then joined the Hawaii Army National Guard as a first lieutenant. As a major, he was part of the National Guard call-up in 1968 and served in the Republic of Vietnam, initially as the executive office of an engineer battalion. Promoted to lieutenant colonel while on this tour, he served his last 4 months in Vietnam as commander of the same battalion.

His National Guard service included varied command and staff positions. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1980 and was assigned as the assistant adjutant general, Army. In 1982 he was appointed as the adjutant general, Hawaii by Governor George Ariyoshi and was promoted to the rank of major general. He attended many military service schools including the Army's Command, General Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. His military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with cluster, the Army Commendation Medal, and numerous service medals.

In his civilian life, between tours of active duty, he was an engineer with the Navy Civil Service at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Lualualei, Oahu. He started as a junior engineer in 1954 when he was released from active duty. He progressed to the director of the engineering division and deputy public works officer for the Naval Ammunition Depot. He retired from Federal civil service in 1982, when he was appointed the adjutant general.

His wife is Leimomi—Momi—Mookini Lum. She served for 32 years with the Honolulu Police Department, as a police investigator, and retired in 1982. Her last 20 years of police service involved working in the juvenile crime prevention division of the Police Department. Together they have three children, Mrs. Angela Thomas, Mrs. Alexia Carvalho, and Mr. Oliver Lum, and four granddaughters.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 1692. A bill to grant a Federal charter to Korean War Veterans Association, Incorporated.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2031. A bill to amend the Social Security Act to provide grants and flexibility through demonstration projects for States to provide universal, comprehensive, cost-effective systems of health care coverage, with simplified administration; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2032. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a competitive grant program for the Puget Sound area to provide comprehensive conservation planning to address water quality; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 2033. A bill to provide for greater disclosure to, and empowerment of, consumers who have entered into a contract for cellular telephone service; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. VITTER):

S. Res. 310. A resolution commending the city of Lafayette, Louisiana, for engaging in a year-long celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert Du Motier, commonly known as the Marquis de Lafayette; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mrs. DOLE, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 311. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 206

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 206, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 415

At the request of Mr. BROWBACK, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 415, a bill to amend the Revised Statutes of the United States to prevent the use of the legal system in a manner that extorts money from State and local governments, and the Federal Government, and inhibits such governments' constitutional actions under the first, tenth, and fourteenth amendments.