

made an especially meritorious contribution to society.

Dr. Hooks is a living example of that type of person. His life is an example that even while facing adversity through hard work, you can accomplish revolutionary change. His legacy will not only continue in our State but also throughout our Nation.

So it is only fitting that through this award he once again joins the ranks of other civil rights pioneers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Clarence M. Mitchell, Leon Howard Sullivan, and Roy Wilkins.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve in the Senate on behalf of Tennesseans such as Dr. Hooks, who have exemplified the great courage that has not only positively affected our State but our country as well.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Minnesota, for the work she has done on the issue I will talk about today—consumer product safety.

This year, our Nation has witnessed recall after recall after recall of contaminated products—toys, vitamins, pet food, tires, the list goes on and on. Our fundamentally flawed trade policy, mixed with an indifferent—or worse—consumer protection agency, has eroded nearly 40 years of safety standards in our Nation. In the past, until the last few years, our safety standards assured parents they could trust that their children's toys were lead free.

We are now trying to strengthen the Consumer Protection Safety Commission. I am a cosponsor of the legislation authored by Senator PRYOR that will help strengthen that agency—the agency charged with keeping our families safe from contaminated products—whether it is toys or other products.

Earlier this week, however, a New York Times story revealed that the CPSC Acting Chairwoman, Nancy Nord, is actively working against these improvements, lobbying Congress to kill this bill. That is shameful.

This morning's Washington Post revealed that, in addition to fighting agency improvements, Chairwoman Nord has enjoyed trips across the country and around the world, paid for by the very toy companies she is responsible for regulating. That is outrageous.

These were trips paid for by the toy industry, the industry that is now under scrutiny for cutting corners—

cutting corners that earn big profits for industry CEOs and sends toxic toys into our children's bedrooms.

Parents have the right to trust that their children's toys are safe. Every American has the right to trust that their Government is doing its job to keep us safe. Sadly, that does not appear to be the case with the CPSC.

Now, Chairwoman Nord claims her agency simply doesn't have the resources to do the job right. She claims the legislation now working its way through Congress would overburden her agency. Why then, one must ask, did Chairwoman Nord fail to ask for more money when she met with the Appropriations Committee earlier this year? The 2008 budget she defended before Congress doesn't even account for inflation. It leaves this agency less well equipped to prevent harm to children and to the rest of us. She stood up before the House Financial Services Appropriations Subcommittee and defended this budget, never once asserting the need for additional resources.

What better opportunity could Chairwoman Nord have had to improve her agency? What better opportunity could she have had to protect our families? But she failed.

The CPSC budget is half what it was when it was created in the 1970s—in the days when most toys and consumer products were made in this country. We imported last year \$288 billion worth of products from China, tens of billions of dollars of products and toys from China and other countries that don't have a regulatory system or a Consumer Product Safety Commission or a system in place to protect consumers.

During this time, the CPSC staff dwindled from nearly 1,000 to 420. We must increase funding and staff to the CPSC. We need to increase coordination between the CPSC and Customs officials. We must give the CPSC the authority to examine and approve other nations' regulatory systems before imports from those countries show up in our children's bedrooms.

We need a leader at the CPSC who supports these goals. It is clear that Chairwoman Nord does not. She has been given the responsibility of doing everything in her power to keep our families safe and our children safe. Instead, Chairwoman Nord supports an abysmal agency budget request, is actively working against efforts to strengthen her agency, and takes trips funded by manufacturers.

Chairwoman Nancy Nord should step down. It is time to put a chairperson in place who is not satisfied with: We are doing the best we can.

We need a chairperson who fights for the authority and the resources the CPSC needs to do the job it is supposed to do—protect our families.

We need real leadership at the CPSC—leadership that doesn't side with manufacturers over consumer safety, leadership that stands up to industry pressure, leadership that puts our children and our families first.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR FORCE AND NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force. As you are well aware, the Air Force was created by the National Security Act of 1947, the very same law that established the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Like many of my colleagues in this distinguished Chamber, I represent a State with a rich history of involvement with and support for the U.S. Air Force. Less than 6 months after the Air Force was officially founded on September 18, 1947, the Las Vegas Air Force Base was reactivated to host a pilot training wing. With the onset of the Korean war, its mission changed from an advanced single-engine school to one of training jet fighter pilots for the then Far East Air Forces. And thus began a long tradition of air combat training programs held at this site that has earned this Air Force base the proud nickname "Home of the Fighter Pilot."

No single airman in Nevada history exemplified the meaning behind this slogan more than LT William H. Nellis. Born in Santa Rita, NM, in 1916, as a young man Lieutenant Nellis moved to my hometown of Searchlight, Nevada, where his father—like so many other respectable Nevadans—worked as a hard rock miner. When World War II began, Lieutenant Nellis was already married with 2 children, but this passionate young man knew he could not remain uninvolved in America's effort to rid the world of foreign oppression. After seeing a newsreel about the Army Air Corps, the precursor to the U.S. Air Force, he decided to enlist.

During the course of his valiant service, Lieutenant Nellis flew 69 missions over Europe and was shot down twice, surviving each crash and making his way back to Allied lines. Unwavering in his patriotism, he continued to volunteer to fly, doing what he saw as his duty for the great cause. Sadly, Lieutenant Nellis' last flight would come on December 27, 1944. During the Battle of the Bulge, an engagement that would cost the lives of nearly 20,000 Americans, Lieutenant Nellis was killed in action while flying with the 513th Fighter Squadron, 406 Fighter Group over Bastogne.

To honor this great Nevadan and a true American hero, the Las Vegas Air Force Base was renamed in his honor on May 20, 1950. Ever since, Nellis Air Force Base has been a stalwart of Nevada's military infrastructure and has provided U.S. airmen with the very best aerial combat training in the world.

As the pinnacle of advanced air combat aviation training, Nellis Air Force Base has provided invaluable service to the United States and its efforts in the global war on terror. The mission statement at Nellis sums it up best,

“The crews do not come to learn how to fly, but instead how to be the best combat aviators in the world.”

As we celebrate this historic occasion, we must never forget the importance of places like Nellis Air Force Base. I know many of my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate share my belief that America's ability to project its military might in the skies around the world is a direct result of the expert training programs at facilities like Nellis. Today we honor all of the men and women who have served proudly in the U.S. Air Force over the past 60 years. We owe them a tremendous amount of gratitude for their courageous sacrifices in defending the nation that we all work so hard to preserve.

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the attached list of subcommittee assignments for the Committee on Appropriations be printed in the RECORD, to supplant the list printed in the RECORD on February 27, 2007.

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

SUBCOMMITTEES

Senator Byrd, as chairman of the Committee, and Senator Cochran, as ranking minority member of the Committee, are ex officio members of all subcommittees of which they are not regular members.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Kohl,¹ Harkin, Dorgan, Feinstein, Durbin, Johnson, Nelson, Reed, Bennett,² Cochran, Specter, Bond, McConnell, Craig, Brownback. (8-7)

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Mikulski,¹ Inouye, Leahy, Kohl, Harkin, Dorgan, Feinstein, Reed, Lautenberg, Shelby,² Gregg, Stevens, Domenici, McConnell, Hutchison, Brownback, Alexander. (9-8)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Senators Inouye,¹ Byrd, Leahy, Harkin, Dorgan, Durbin, Feinstein, Mikulski, Kohl, Murray, Stevens,² Cochran, Specter, Domenici, Bond, McConnell, Shelby, Gregg, Hutchison. (10-9)

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

Senators Dorgan,¹ Byrd, Murray, Feinstein, Johnson, Landrieu, Inouye, Reed, Lautenberg, Domenici,² Cochran, McConnell, Bennett, Craig, Bond, Hutchison, Allard. (9-8)

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Senators Durbin,¹ Murray, Landrieu, Lautenberg, Nelson, Brownback,² Bond, Shelby, Allard. (5-4)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Senators Byrd,¹ Inouye, Leahy, Mikulski, Kohl, Murray, Landrieu, Lautenberg, Nelson, Cochran,² Gregg, Stevens, Specter, Domenici, Shelby, Craig, Alexander. (9-8)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Feinstein,¹ Byrd, Leahy, Dorgan, Mikulski, Kohl, Johnson, Reed, Nelson, Allard,² Craig, Stevens, Cochran, Domenici, Bennett, Gregg, Alexander. (9-8)

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Harkin,¹ Inouye, Kohl, Murray, Landrieu, Durbin, Reed, Lautenberg, Specter,² Cochran, Gregg, Craig, Hutchison, Stevens, Shelby. (8-7)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Senators Landrieu,¹ Durbin, Nelson, Alexander,² Allard. (3-2)

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Johnson,¹ Inouye, Landrieu, Byrd, Murray, Reed, Nelson, Hutchison,² Craig, Brownback, Allard, McConnell, Bennett. (7-6)

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Senators Leahy,¹ Inouye, Harkin, Mikulski, Durbin, Johnson, Landrieu, Reed, Gregg,² McConnell, Specter, Bennett, Bond, Brownback, Alexander. (8-7)

TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Murray,¹ Byrd, Mikulski, Kohl, Durbin, Dorgan, Leahy, Harkin, Feinstein, Johnson, Lautenberg, Bond,² Shelby, Specter, Bennett, Hutchison, Brownback, Stevens, Domenici, Alexander, Allard. (11-10)

¹ Subcommittee chairman.

² Ranking minority member.

SRI LANKA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, it has been a little over a year since I last spoke in this Chamber about the fragile peace process in Sri Lanka. I want to take a moment to discuss the situation today because in the past year we have seen human rights in that small island nation steadily deteriorate. I also want to correct some confusion that may have occurred as a result of statements reported in the press regarding the Senate's action in connection with the fiscal year 2008 State, Foreign Operations appropriations bill. That bill passed the Senate by a vote of 81 to 12 on September 6, 2007, and we are waiting to begin conference discussions with the House of Representatives.

Over the years, I have been a strong supporter of U.S.-Sri Lankan relations. A good friend, Ambassador James Spain, served there, and the American people acted quickly to provide emergency assistance for Sri Lanka after the December 2004 tsunami devastated Sri Lanka's east, north, and southern coasts, claiming tens of thousands of lives. Beyond that, we have long supported the Sri Lankan Government's efforts to respond to acts of terrorism by the LTTE, which has been designated by the Department of State and the European Union as a foreign terrorist organization because of its attacks against civilians, assassinations of political leaders, forced recruitment of children, and other crimes.

We deplore these tactics. However, we are also aware that the LTTE has, at times, shown a willingness to participate in serious negotiations, as well as to respond to human rights concerns. These overtures should be pursued. We also recognize that the LTTE

should not be equated with the Tamil community. There are many ethnic Tamils living in and outside of Sri Lanka who do not condone acts of violence and terrorism against civilians. Many have been victims of the LTTE themselves.

At the same time, our aid to the Sri Lankan Government is not a blank check. We have been increasingly concerned with reports of abuses by Sri Lankan Government forces—not from the LTTE or their supporters as some have inaccurately claimed but from the United Nations, the Department of State, and international human rights organizations. These reports are not “disinformation” or “misinformation” as some Sri Lankan officials have alleged. Rather, they contain specific, documented, consistent information indicating a steady increase in serious human rights violations by both Sri Lankan Government forces and the LTTE since the collapse of the ceasefire. While the first acts of aggression were attributed to the LTTE, these reports also implicate Government forces in attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, torture, and forced disappearances. There is also evidence that Sri Lankan Government forces have stood by while allied paramilitary organizations have carried out abuses, including forcibly recruiting child soldiers. With few exceptions, the Sri Lankan Government has yet to bring the perpetrators, including members of Government security forces, to justice.

It is important to note that the Sri Lankan Government's respect for human rights and the rule of law has deteriorated even outside conflict-affected areas. The Millennium Challenge Corporation suspended more than \$11 million intended for Sri Lanka because of the deteriorating security situation and the Government's worsening performance on human rights. Freedom House, whose assessments of political rights and civil liberties are factored into the Millennium Challenge Corporation's analysis, stated “The serious human rights abuses and excessive restrictions on freedom of speech and association by the government of Sri Lanka merit the country's removal from a list of eligible recipients for U.S. Millennium Challenge Account assistance.” We want to see a Millennium Challenge compact for Sri Lanka, but these problems must first be recognized and effectively addressed.

An international human rights field presence, under the auspices of the United Nations, could do much to improve the situation. Given the gravity and scale of the violations witnessed in Sri Lanka, and particularly the inability of the Sri Lankan Government to monitor the abuses taking place in areas held by the LTTE, such a presence would help protect lives, document abuses by all sides, and support the Government and civil society in protecting the civilian population. The