

students. These schools play an important role in their communities, teaching service and character to their students in the Catholic tradition.

This tradition is what encourages many parents to sacrifice to pay for a Catholic education. As many students, parents, and teachers will tell you, a Catholic education provides balance to students not only in their educational experience, but also in their spiritual life. The values taught in Catholic schools are important for developing engaged and informed members of the community.

Catholic education has played a needed role in our educational system for more than a century. I am confident that Nevada and our Nation will be well served by Catholic schools for many years to come.

ANNIVERSARY OF ALASKA STATEHOOD

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, January marked the 48th anniversary of the day Alaska achieved statehood. Earlier this week, Senator MURKOWSKI and I introduced S.J. Res. 49, a resolution commemorating our State's 50th anniversary. We will reach this milestone on January 3, 2009.

Alaska's path to statehood was a long one. In 1867, Secretary of the Treasury William Seward convinced President Andrew Johnson to purchase Alaska for \$7.2 million. At the time, this purchase was often derided as "Seward's Folly," and many wondered what the United States would do with what some called its new "Polar Bear Garden."

While history shortly proved the critics wrong, statehood for Alaska did not come easily. It took more than 90 years for Alaska to become a state. The first Alaska statehood bill was introduced by James Wickersham, our territorial delegate, in 1916. Over the years, seven Congresses considered legislation regarding Alaska's admission to our Union. Between 1946 and 1957 alone, statehood hearings held by the House and Senate spanned more than 3,500 pages in the printed record.

Alaskans tirelessly advocated for statehood. On November 8, 1955, 55 men and women assembled at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks for Alaska's Constitutional Convention. These delegates worked for 75 days, and their efforts produced a precedent-setting constitution.

Thanks to the dedication of George Lehleitner of Louisiana and C.W. Bill Snedden, the publisher of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, our constitution included Alaska's version of the "Tennessee Plan". Under this plan, our territory elected a congressional delegation without federal approval. Our constitution—and this plan—ultimately became the basis for congressional approval of statehood.

Alaskans also made countless trips to Washington, DC, to testify in support of statehood. These visits were

critical to our success—in 1957, the House Insular Affairs Committee reported, "Alaska is in all ways ready for statehood."

Forty-two years after the introduction of the first statehood bill, our long wait finally ended. On May 12, 1958, Representative Clair Engle moved to bring the Alaska statehood bill to the floor of the House. He sought and received a special privileged status which is reserved for statehood bills. This status allowed him to circumvent the Rules Committee, which had blocked statehood legislation for more than 11 months.

Right up until the end, statehood for Alaska faced fierce opposition. In the Senate, a small group of opponents prolonged the debate for 5 long days and nights. I was among the many Alaskans who gathered in the viewing galleries above this Chamber on June 30, 1958, waiting for the historic vote. At 8:02 pm, the Senate passed the Alaska statehood bill by a vote of 64 to 20. Six months later, on January 3, 1959, we officially became the 49th State in the Union.

I come to the floor today to pay tribute to the Alaskans who fought for statehood and our good friends in Congress who supported them. Bob Bartlett, our State's delegate in the House, worked on statehood for 14 years. He was assisted by men like Leo O'Brien of New York, who chaired the Territories Subcommittee; John Saylor of Pennsylvania, who led the floor fight for Republican supporters; Clair Engle of California, who chaired the Insular Affairs Committee; and Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House.

In the Senate, Alaskans found a good friend in Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington State, who was chairman of Territories on the Interior Committee. Senator Jackson helped plan the successful strategy that put the vote for statehood over the top. Twenty-five years later, Senator Jackson cosponsored a resolution celebrating the silver anniversary of Alaska's statehood. Earlier this week, Senator MURKOWSKI and I offered a similar resolution, this time to commemorate our State's golden anniversary in 2009.

Alaskans also found many good friends outside of the Halls of Congress. President Eisenhower, President Truman, and Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton each supported our campaign for statehood. It was my great privilege to know and serve with many of these men. I am particularly indebted to Secretary Seaton, who asked me to serve as his legislative counsel, Assistant to the Secretary, and ultimately the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior during the Eisenhower administration. These positions gave me the opportunity to work on the Alaska Statehood Act.

History has proven those who criticized Seward's purchase—and those who opposed statehood—wrong. When William Seward purchased Alaska from Russia, he paid \$7,200,000—less than 2

cents per acre. With the full rights and opportunities granted to the states in our Union, Alaska has more than made good on this investment—the Federal revenue from the development of our resources has repaid this investment hundreds of times over.

The list of our State's opportunities remains promising. We have vast coal reserves and enormous potential in oil and gas both on and off our shores. Trillions of feet of gas hydrates lie beneath our permafrost. Our State's 34,000 miles of shoreline are the gateway to some of our Nation's most promising tidal and ocean energy prospects. Our forests contain much of the Nation's timber and pulp. Sixty percent of our country's commercial fish harvest is caught in the waters off of our State's shores.

Our geographic location was a vital asset during World War II and the Cold War, and it continues to offer our Armed Forces important strategic advantages. Our location has also helped boost our Nation's trade with Canada, Russia, and nations throughout Asia.

Our State's greatest resource, however, will always be our people. Alaskans are resourceful, enterprising, and fiercely independent. Our pioneer spirit runs deep. And the traditions and heritage of our Alaska Native people have greatly contributed to our country's cultural life.

The list of our State's opportunities is long, but we are still a young State. For each of our opportunities, there is a challenge to overcome. The Federal Government owns more than 60 percent of our lands. We have only 14,000 miles of roads. Seventy percent of our towns, villages, and cities can be reached only by boat or air. If we are to fulfill our potential, we will need greater understanding of these facts.

Forty-eight years is not a long time. In fact, our State is younger than all but eight of the Members who serve in this Senate. Our ability to fulfill our potential depends on the willingness of those who serve in Congress to provide us with the opportunities and support given to other States when they were in similar stages of their development.

On this anniversary of statehood, Alaskans honor those who made this milestone possible. And we share our hope that—once again—we will find friends in Congress and elsewhere that will help us fulfill our State's potential.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the rules adopted on January 31, 2007, by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be printed in the RECORD.

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

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

RULE 1—MEETINGS

1.1 Regular Meetings.—Regular meetings shall be held on the first and third Wednesday of each month when Congress is in session.

1.2 Additional Meetings.—The Chairman, in consultation with the ranking minority member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

1.3 Notification.—In the case of any meeting of the committee, other than a regularly scheduled meeting, the clerk of the committee shall notify every member of the committee of the time and place of the meeting and shall give reasonable notice which, except in extraordinary circumstances, shall be at least 24 hours in advance of any meeting held in Washington, DC, and at least 48 hours in the case of any meeting held outside Washington, DC.

1.4 Called Meeting.—If three members of the committee have made a request in writing to the Chairman to call a meeting of the committee, and the Chairman fails to call such a meeting within 7 calendar days thereafter, including the day on which the written notice is submitted, a majority of the members may call a meeting by filing a written notice with the clerk of the committee who shall promptly notify each member of the committee in writing of the date and time of the meeting.

1.5 Adjournment of Meetings.—The Chairman of the committee or a subcommittee shall be empowered to adjourn any meeting of the committee or a subcommittee if a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time scheduled for such meeting.

RULE 2—MEETINGS AND HEARINGS IN GENERAL

2.1 Open Sessions.—Business meetings and hearings held by the committee or any subcommittee shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided for in Senate Rule XXVI, paragraph 5.

2.2 Transcripts.—A transcript shall be kept of each business meeting and hearing of the committee or any subcommittee unless a majority of the committee or the subcommittee agrees that some other form of permanent record is preferable.

2.3 Reports.—An appropriate opportunity shall be given the Minority to examine the proposed text of committee reports prior to their filing or publication. In the event there are supplemental, minority, or additional views, an appropriate opportunity shall be given the Majority to examine the proposed text prior to filing or publication.

2.4 Attendance.—(a) Meetings. Official attendance of all markups and executive sessions of the committee shall be kept by the committee clerk. Official attendance of all subcommittee markups and executive sessions shall be kept by the subcommittee clerk.

(b) Hearings. Official attendance of all hearings shall be kept, provided that, Senators are notified by the committee Chairman and ranking minority member, in the case of committee hearings, and by the subcommittee Chairman and ranking minority member, in the case of subcommittee hearings, 48 hours in advance of the hearing that attendance will be taken. Otherwise, no attendance will be taken. Attendance at all hearings is encouraged.

RULE 3—HEARING PROCEDURES

3.1 Notice.—Public notice shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the committee or any subcommittee at least 1 week in advance of such hearing unless the Chairman of the full committee or the subcommittee determines that the hearing is noncontroversial or that

special circumstances require expedited procedures and a majority of the committee or the subcommittee involved concurs. In no case shall a hearing be conducted with less than 24 hours notice.

3.2 Witness Statements.—Each witness who is to appear before the committee or any subcommittee shall file with the committee or subcommittee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of his or her testimony and as many copies as the Chairman of the committee or subcommittee prescribes.

3.3 Minority Witnesses.—In any hearing conducted by the committee, or any subcommittee thereof, the minority members of the committee or subcommittee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman by the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee to call witnesses of their selection during at least 1 day of such hearing pertaining to the matter or matters heard by the committee or subcommittee.

3.4 Swearing in of Witnesses.—Witnesses in committee or subcommittee hearings may be required to give testimony under oath whenever the Chairman or ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee deems such to be necessary.

3.5 Limitation.—Each member shall be limited to 5 minutes in the questioning of any witness until such time as all members who so desire have had an opportunity to question a witness. Questions from members shall rotate from majority to minority members in order of seniority or in order of arrival at the hearing.

RULE 4—NOMINATIONS

4.1 Assignment.—All nominations shall be considered by the full committee.

4.2 Standards.—In considering a nomination, the committee shall inquire into the nominee's experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity to serve in the position to which he or she has been nominated.

4.3 Information.—Each nominee shall submit in response to questions prepared by the committee the following information:

(1) A detailed biographical resume which contains information relating to education, employment, and achievements;

(2) Financial information, including a financial statement which lists assets and liabilities of the nominee; and

(3) Copies of other relevant documents requested by the committee. Information received pursuant to this subsection shall be available for public inspection except as specifically designated confidential by the committee.

4.4 Hearings.—The committee shall conduct a public hearing during which the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her suitability for office. No hearing shall be held until at least 48 hours after the nominee has responded to a prehearing questionnaire submitted by the committee.

4.5 Action on Confirmation.—A business meeting to consider a nomination shall not occur on the same day that the hearing on the nominee is held. The Chairman, with the agreement of the ranking minority member, may waive this requirement.

RULE 5—QUORUMS

5.1 Testimony.—For the purpose of receiving evidence, the swearing of witnesses, and the taking of sworn or unsworn testimony at any duly scheduled hearing, a quorum of the committee and the subcommittee thereof shall consist of one member.

5.2 Business.—A quorum for the transaction of committee or subcommittee business, other than for reporting a measure or recommendation to the Senate or the taking of testimony, shall consist of one-third of the members of the committee or sub-

committee, including at least one member from each party.

5.3 Reporting.—A majority of the membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum for reporting bills, nominations, matters, or recommendations to the Senate. No measure or recommendation shall be ordered reported from the committee unless a majority of the committee members are physically present. The vote of the committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of those members who are physically present at the time the vote is taken.

RULE 6—VOTING

6.1 Rollcalls.—A roll call vote of the members shall be taken upon the request of any member.

6.2 Proxies.—Voting by proxy as authorized by the Senate rules for specific bills or subjects shall be allowed whenever a quorum of the committee is actually present.

6.3 Polling.—The committee may poll any matters of committee business, other than a vote on reporting to the Senate any measures, matters or recommendations or a vote on closing a meeting or hearing to the public, provided that every member is polled and every poll consists of the following two questions:

(1) Do you agree or disagree to poll the proposal; and

(2) Do you favor or oppose the proposal.

If any member requests, any matter to be polled shall be held for meeting rather than being polled. The chief clerk of the committee shall keep a record of all polls.

RULE 7—SUBCOMMITTEES

7.1 Assignments.—To assure the equitable assignment of members to subcommittees, no member of the committee will receive assignment to a second subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members of the committee have chosen assignments to one subcommittee, and no member shall receive assignment to a third subcommittee until, in order of seniority, all members have chosen assignments to two subcommittees.

7.2 Attendance.—Any member of the committee may sit with any subcommittee during a hearing or meeting but shall not have the authority to vote on any matter before the subcommittee unless he or she is a member of such subcommittee.

7.3 Ex Officio Members.—The Chairman and ranking minority member shall serve as nonvoting ex officio members of the subcommittees on which they do not serve as voting members. The Chairman and ranking minority member may not be counted toward a quorum.

7.4 Scheduling.—No subcommittee may schedule a meeting or hearing at a time designated for a hearing or meeting of the full committee. No more than one subcommittee business meeting may be held at the same time.

7.5 Discharge.—Should a subcommittee fail to report back to the full committee on any measure within a reasonable time, the Chairman may withdraw the measure from such subcommittee and report that fact to the full committee for further disposition. The full committee may at any time, by majority vote of those members present, discharge a subcommittee from further consideration of a specific piece of legislation.

7.6 Application of Committee Rules to Subcommittees.—The proceedings of each subcommittee shall be governed by the rules of the full committee, subject to such authorizations or limitations as the committee may from time to time prescribe.

RULE 8—INVESTIGATIONS, SUBPOENAS AND DEPOSITIONS

8.1 Investigations.—Any investigation undertaken by the committee or a subcommittee in which depositions are taken or

subpoenas issued, must be authorized by a majority of the members of the committee voting for approval to conduct such investigation at a business meeting of the committee convened in accordance with Rule 1.

8.2 Subpoenas.—The Chairman, with the approval of the ranking minority member of the committee, is delegated the authority to subpoena the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials at a hearing of the committee or a subcommittee or in connection with the conduct of an investigation authorized in accordance with paragraph 8.1. The Chairman may subpoena attendance or production without the approval of the ranking minority member when the Chairman has not received notification from the ranking minority member of disapproval of the subpoena within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, of being notified of the subpoena. If a subpoena is disapproved by the ranking minority member as provided in this paragraph the subpoena may be authorized by vote of the members of the committee. When the committee or Chairman authorizes subpoenas, subpoenas may be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or any other member of the committee designated by the Chairman.

8.3 Notice for Taking Depositions.—Notices for the taking of depositions, in an investigation authorized by the committee, shall be authorized and be issued by the Chairman or by a staff officer designated by him. Such notices shall specify a time and place for examination, and the name of the Senator, staff officer or officers who will take the deposition. Unless otherwise specified, the deposition shall be in private. The committee shall not initiate procedures leading to criminal or civil enforcement proceedings for a witness' failure to appear unless the deposition notice was accompanied by a committee subpoena.

8.4 Procedure for Taking Depositions.—Witnesses shall be examined upon oath administered by an individual authorized by local law to administer oaths. The Chairman will rule, by telephone or otherwise, on any objection by a witness. The transcript of a deposition shall be filed with the committee clerk.

RULE 9—AMENDING THE RULES

These rules shall become effective upon publication in the Congressional Record. These rules may be modified, amended, or repealed by the committee, provided that all members are present or provide proxies or if a notice in writing of the proposed changes has been given to each member at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which action thereon is to be taken. The changes shall become effective immediately upon publication of the changed rule or rules in the Congressional Record, or immediately upon approval of the changes if so resolved by the committee as long as any witnesses who may be affected by the change in rules are provided with them.

ILLEGAL GUN TRAFFICKING

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, there is growing awareness across the country that too little has been done to combat illegal gun trafficking. This awareness was validated by a report released last week by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence which revealed that some licensed gun dealers are complicit in aiding gun traffickers, yet remain largely untouched by the law.

The report, "Shady Dealings: Illegal Gun Trafficking from Licensed Gun

Dealers," was released in Philadelphia, a city that is combating a sharp increase in gun violence. In 2002, the city reached a 17-year low in homicides with 288. However, since then, homicide rates have soared. Last year, the city suffered 406 homicides and is on track to exceed that total in 2007. The report documents over two dozen cases of illegal gun trafficking from dealers across the country. In each case, gunrunners were prosecuted; however, the dealers who supplied them received no legal sanctions.

"Shady Dealings" documents several scenarios in which dealers turn a blind eye to clear indications of gunrunning. In-store straw purchases are transactions that violate Federal law in which one individual submits to the required Federal background check for a gun that is clearly intended for use by someone else. Multiple purchases of the same model gun by an individual should be an indication that the guns are not for personal use. Large volume sales of handguns should be a red flag to dealers. In one case, a gun dealer sold 87 pistols to a gun trafficker's straw buyer in a single transaction. Another red flag for trafficking should occur when a single buyer makes repeated purchases from a dealer. In one instance, a trafficker from Ohio made at least 19 visits to a particular gun shop, yet was never turned away. Dealer sales to traffickers at gun shows present special opportunities for trafficking. A single gun dealer in Georgia was recorded selling eight guns to one trafficker and 20 additional pistols to two other traffickers. Several of the weapons were recovered by the New York City police, and one of them was used to shoot a New York City police officer.

Unfortunately, making life easier for gun traffickers presents the opportunity for financial reward with little to no consequence for gun dealers. Not one of the dealers profiled in the Brady Center report has been put out of business by the ATF or prosecuted for selling guns to convicted gun traffickers. As a result, the underground market for guns is fueled the diversion of massive numbers of guns from licensed gun dealers into the hands of criminals. Almost 60 percent of the guns traced to crime by the ATF originated from only about 1 percent of the Nation's gun dealers. Additionally, approximately 30 percent of the guns traced to crime were traced within 3 years of their retail sale. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass sensible gun legislation that will help prevent such egregious acts and help protect the welfare of our communities.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, today marks the start of American Heart Month. I note the occasion not as a reminder to my colleagues to purchase flowers or chocolates for their loved

ones for Valentine's Day but as a reminder that we need to redouble our efforts to fight heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases.

More than 80 million Americans—about 1 in 3 adults—are living with some form of cardiovascular disease. Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in America and stroke is the No. 3 killer. These devastating diseases have touched the lives of nearly every family in America.

Heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases will cost our Nation more than \$430 billion in 2007, including more than \$284 billion in direct medical costs.

While it is true that we are making some progress, we can't win the fight against heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases without the support of Congress and the administration. Next week, the President will send Congress a budget proposal for fiscal year 2008. The budget is more than just a lengthy document—it is a statement of our Nation's priorities. I believe investing in cardiovascular research, prevention, and treatment programs should be one of our highest priorities.

I was disappointed by the budget the President proposed last year. The administration's proposal would have scaled back funding for heart disease and stroke research at the National Institutes of Health, NIH, prevention programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, and a program that helps rural communities purchase lifesaving medical equipment.

The administration's fiscal year 2007 budget would have cut funding for the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute by \$21 million and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke by \$11 million. I am grateful that Congress rejected this proposal. Our investment in the NIH holds enormous promise to turn the tide against so many devastating diseases, including heart disease and stroke.

The President also proposed scaling back funding for the heart disease and stroke prevention program at the CDC. This program helps States design and implement plans to prevent cardiovascular disease before it occurs. Despite the fact that heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the country and stroke is the No. 3 killer, the CDC does not have enough funding to implement this important program in all States. The CDC provides funding for 19 States to develop plans and another 14 States to implement the plans.

Finally, the administration tried to eliminate funding for a program that helps rural communities purchase automated external defibrillators, AEDs. AEDs are small, laptop-size devices that help restore normal heart function after cardiac arrest. AEDs save lives, especially when placed in areas where large numbers of people congregate and in rural communities where emergency medical personnel are not readily available. I believe Congress should continue to provide grants