

offered this measure with Senators CLINTON, INOUYE HUTCHISON, SNOWE, SMITH, and VITTER.

The amendment provides advanced borrowing authority so that \$43.5 million can be made available for 9-1-1 upgrades which are desperately needed throughout the country—especially in rural America. Congress previously allocated these funds in the digital television transition legislation, but without the borrowing authority language, public safety would have to wait until after the digital transition auction before they could receive these important funds.

Also added was an amendment sponsored by Chairman INOUYE that I co-sponsored that establishes a national registered armed law enforcement program for law enforcement officers who need to be armed while traveling by air. This law enforcement provision builds upon mandates in the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004.

An additional amendment was sponsored by Chairman INOUYE with my cosponsorship that enhances the canine provisions in the underlying bill by expanding the national explosives detection canine team training program. Beyond increasing the training capacity at the current facility at Lackland Air Force Base as provided in the underlying bill, the amendment adopted would require DHS to explore options of creating a standardized TSA-approved canine program that private sector entities could utilize to meet the ongoing need for canines.

We must not politicize national security. The Commerce Committee initiatives included in the pending bill were achieved only because of bipartisanship. I am pleased that the development and passage of the bill was conducted by the bill managers in that same spirit. And while some provisions contained within the bill need to be further developed—as many of our colleagues have highlighted over the past few weeks—I voted in favor of the bill as I support the preponderance of its contents.

NATIONAL AWARD FOR PASSING MOST LOCAL SMOKEFREE LAWS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to commend the great State of Illinois for receiving the National Award for Passing Most Local Smokefree Laws in 2006. This honor was awarded to Illinois by the national organization Americans for Nonsmokers Rights.

Last year, a recordbreaking 36 Illinois cities and counties enacted smokefree laws, more than any other State in the Nation. In doing so, Illinois has taken a firm stance against the devastating consequences that smoking has on our communities.

The 2006 Surgeon General's report, "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," concluded that smoking rooms and ventilation systems cannot protect people from secondhand smoke. The re-

port reaffirmed previous health findings that secondhand smoke causes heart disease, cancer, respiratory problems, and even death.

I am honored to acknowledge the tireless efforts of public health advocates and State legislators who helped make it possible. Before 2005, Illinois communities were preempted from passing local laws. Now, the local community has the right to deal with this important issue and help improve the health of millions of Illinoisans. The following communities have enacted smokefree laws in the State: Arlington Heights, Barrington, Bedford Park, Bloomington, Buffalo Grove, Burr Ridge, Champaign, Chicago, Cook County, Deerfield, DeKalb, Elk Grove Village, Evanston, Hawthorn Woods, Highland Park, Hinsdale, Hoffman Estates, Lake Forest, Libertyville, Lincolnshire, Lindenhurst, Long Grove, McLean County, Mt. Prospect, Normal, Northbrook, Oak Forest, Oak Park, Orland Park, Palatine, Park Ridge, Rolling Meadows, Sangamon County, Schaumburg, Skokie, Springfield, Tinley Park, Urbana, Vernon Hills, Wheaton, and Wilmette.

Again, I extend my deepest congratulations to the citizens of Illinois, who now can breathe a little easier.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the importance of the need to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000.

This act expired September 30, 2006, and now over 700 counties and 4,400 school districts in 39 States are in financial limbo.

In simple terms, this means that 8 million kids in rural America are going to be impacted by Congress's inaction.

This is simply unacceptable.

I have been joined by several of my colleagues in introducing, S. 779, a simple one year reauthorization. This measure would provide some certainty to the impacted counties and schools while Congress works to address the larger issue of a multiyear reauthorization.

It is clear to me that the safety net payments need to continue, but in a manner that encourages and focuses on building collaboration—one of the cornerstones of this act.

For my colleagues who are unfamiliar with this issue, let me quickly review how the Congress got to this point.

In 1992, Congress provided some counties in the Pacific Northwest with a temporary financial "safety net" to help them transition from the timber boom years of the 1980s.

The safety net was scheduled to gradually phase out over a 10-year period, but demands for a more inclusive program resulted in its early termination and the enactment of another

temporary program, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

This act was designed to allow counties an opportunity to transition back to the traditional revenue sharing programs.

The temporary safety net was originally recommended to Congress by the National Forest County Schools Coalition.

One of the Coalition's principles States that special payments to States under this legislation will provide a short-term safety net with a specific termination date.

The county payments program dramatically broadened the geographical and substantive scope of the original safety net payment.

The large majority of the funds still were focused on the Pacific Northwest, but the new national program permitted most States and counties across the country to participate and benefit from it thus, providing a measure of financial certainty to all counties that rely on revenues from Federal forest lands.

The act has been an enormous success, not just achieving but surpassing the goals of Congress.

This act has restored programs for students in rural areas and prevented the closure of numerous isolated schools. It has been a primary funding mechanism to provide rural school students with educational opportunities comparable to those enjoyed by suburban and urban students.

Next, the act has allowed rural county road districts to address the severe maintenance backlog. Snow removal has been restored for citizens, tourists, and school buses. Bridges have been upgraded and replaced, and culverts that are hazardous to fish passage have been upgraded and replaced.

In addition, over 70 Resource Advisory Committees, or RACs, have been formed.

Nationally, these 15-person diverse RAC stakeholder committees have studied and approved more than 2,500 projects on Federal forestlands and adjacent public and private lands.

These projects have addressed a wide variety of improvements drastically needed on our public lands. Projects have included fuels reduction, habitat improvement, watershed restoration, road maintenance and rehabilitation, reforestation, campground and trail improvement, and noxious weed eradication.

RACs are a new and powerful partnership between county governments and the land management agencies.

They are rapidly building the capacity for collaborative public land management decision making in over 150 of our largest forest counties in America and are reducing the gridlock over public land management, community by community.

In the future, I feel the RACs will be providing the leadership to build consensus for projects that will keep our

forests healthy and as a result generate revenue for future projects, counties, and schools.

The achievements of this act over the last few years are positive and substantial. This law should be extended so it can continue to benefit the forest counties, their schools, and continue to contribute to improving the health of our public lands.

If we do not work to reauthorize this act, all of the progress of the last 6 years will be lost.

Schools in timber dependant communities will lose a substantial part of their funding. These school districts will have to start making tough budget decisions such as keeping or canceling after school programs, sports programs, music programs, and trying to determine what is the basic educational needs of our children.

Next, counties will have to reprioritize road maintenance so that only the essential services of the county are met because that is all they will be able to afford.

Congress needs to act now in order to ensure a future for rural schools and counties.

ZIMBABWE

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, the events of the last few days in Zimbabwe are outrageous and warrant universal condemnation. It is time for the government of Robert Mugabe to cease its repressive and divisive actions and to allow Zimbabweans to pursue their hopes for legitimate political change and opportunity.

Since Sunday, the world has watched with horror and outrage as the Mugabe government has cracked down on legitimate opposition, detained 50 Zimbabweans attending a peaceful prayer meeting outside of Harare, and brutalized opposition leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

A protestor was shot and killed. Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, has been badly beaten and suffered severe head injuries. Lovemore Madhuku, the leader of the National Constitutional Assembly, reportedly has a broken arm and numerous other wounds. Many of their colleagues in opposition remain in Harare hospitals.

The Government has responded to the outrage prompted by these attacks on human rights and legitimate expression with characteristic bluster. Once again, we are told that the opposition is to blame. Once again, we hear ominous warnings that the opposition is “set to pay a very heavy price, regardless of who they are.” Meanwhile, the true cause of the strife—President Mugabe’s disastrous rule—remains unaddressed. To the dismay even of his own party, he has declared his intention to run for a new term in office in 2008.

These events are shocking, but sadly they do not come as a surprise. For years, it has been increasingly apparent that the Mugabe government is interested only in its own survival and enrichment, not the welfare of the peo-

ple of Zimbabwe. International observers—including the United States—concluded that the Presidential election of 2002 and the parliamentary elections of 2005 were not free and fair.

The State Department reported just last week in its country report on human rights in Zimbabwe that: “The government engaged in the pervasive and systematic abuse of human rights. The ruling party’s dominant control and manipulation of the political process through intimidation and corruption effectively negated the right of citizens to change their government.”

Meanwhile, the Government’s corruption and mismanagement has brought the Zimbabwean economy to the brink of ruin. Estimates place inflation at a world high of 1,700 percent, and the IMF forecasts that this could pass 4,000 percent by the end of the year. Unemployment stands at 80 percent. Poverty rates are soaring. Zimbabwe’s economy is shrinking faster than any other country in the world that is not at war.

I am heartened, though, that this political and economic deterioration has been met with growing calls for change.

Within Zimbabwe, the opposition to Mugabe is showing resilience and courage. Factions of Mugabe’s own party have indicated that they want a transition in 2008, and ordinary citizens are increasingly voicing their hopes for a new chapter.

Beyond Zimbabwe, frustration with the Mugabe government is mounting. The head of the African Union has expressed his embarrassment at the situation in Zimbabwe. South Africa and the Southern African Development Community, which have been slow to criticize Zimbabwe in the past, seem to be losing patience. The United States, European Union, and the United Nations were swift in condemning this latest outrage and have been consistent in their calls for change.

The United States must continue to stand strongly against the Mugabe government’s abuses of power in Zimbabwe. We must join with our European allies, the United Nations, and—most importantly—the countries and institutions of the region to press for positive change in Zimbabwe. That means a peaceful democratic transition in 2008 and support for economic growth and opportunity—including the lifting of sanctions—once the dark cloud of Mugabe’s rule is lifted and Zimbabweans are able again to reach for the new horizon they deserve.

I call on President Mugabe to immediately release all political detainees and repeal the ban on political rallies, to end the use of violence and torture in the jails, permit a free media and abide by the rule of law. His government must also urgently address the humanitarian crisis that has put the mass of his population in dire need of assistance.

Zimbabwe is a nation rich in history and rich in resources. Its talented people have known great hardship just as they have achieved great heights. When Robert Mugabe became President

over a quarter century ago, there was great hope. Zimbabwe had emerged from British rule, claiming its freedom and its future for itself.

Sadly, the freedom and opportunity for which Zimbabweans fought have been eclipsed in the last decade by repression and uncertainty. Instead of peaceful self-determination, we see Zimbabweans intimidated and beaten in the streets. Instead of the responsible management of Zimbabwe’s state institutions, we see state-sanctioned corruption, violence, and property seizures. Instead of economic self-sufficiency, we see what was once one of Africa’s most promising economies in a free-fall.

Yet I am confident that the people of Zimbabwe will once again claim for themselves a better future. As they seek to hold their leaders accountable, as they try to rebuild their lives and their country, they must know that they have a strong and steady friend in the United States. The events of the last few days—and the Mugabe regime—must belong to the past, and the United States must work with the international community to help all Zimbabweans forge a better future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING MAUI ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, INC.

- Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I offer my congratulations to Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. for 42 years of outstanding community service. A private, non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families in need, MEO was chartered as a community action agency on March 22, 1965, by Federal mandate under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

For more than four decades, MEO has served the people of Maui, Moloka’i and Lāna’i through a number of poverty fighting initiatives. By providing employment training and placement, business education for low income entrepreneurs, and micro-enterprise loans, MEO has helped countless citizens get back on the path to financial independence.

Moreover, MEO has helped citizens lead fuller, richer lives by providing housekeeping for seniors, allowing them to remain in their homes, and providing specialized transportation for seniors, persons with disabilities and children to doctor’s offices, grocery stores, and schools. In addition, they have helped former inmates re-integrate and become productive members of the community.

The hard work and dedication of Maui Economic Opportunity’s staff and volunteers have earned national recognition by receiving the prestigious Excellence in Community Action award from the Community Action Partnership. To this I would like to