The best guarantee of a good, secure job in today's increasingly competitive world is a quality education. But not everyone has that opportunity. I know what it is like to have a tough time affording college: With the help of Federal Pell grants, I was the first in my family to graduate from college. Today, a college education costs a small fortune, yet it is harder than ever to find help.

Since 2001, tuition has increased by over 30 percent at the average 4-year public school. Over the same period, family incomes have increased less than 6 percent. As the cost of college continues to rise and family incomes stagnate, more and more students are qualifying for Pell grants and other Federal student aid programs. We can't let a college education become a privilege just for the wealthy. We must ensure that families and students can afford college, regardless of their financial resources.

That is why in the Senate, I am fighting to increase the maximum Pell grant to $5,100—an amount that actually keeps pace with costs. That is also why, on the first day of the 110th session of Congress earlier this month, I introduced legislation to permanently increase the amount that families can save annually for college and take as a tax deduction.

On the same day, in that same spirit, I introduced other legislation to encourage employees to set aside money for their education costs and to encourage employers to provide matching funds through lifelong learning accounts. It is about investing in a more competitive America, a growing economy, and our common future. We are creating a better world for our businesses, our State, and most importantly our workers.

The policies we choose to support reflect our priorities as a nation. When the middle-class gets squeezed from every side, it may be easiest to relent, accept the status quo, or give in to frustration. But we have a responsibility to fight back and to fight for something better. That is what Martin Luther King may have called infinite hope. We can honor King by coming together and making that promise a reality.

TRIBUTE TO CRAIG C. MELLO, PH.D.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on December 10, in Stockholm, Sweden, the Nobel Prize in Medicine for 2006 was awarded to Dr. Craig C. Mello of the University of Massachusetts Medical School for his revolutionary discovery of the gene-silencing process called RNA interference.

RNAi, as it is called, is a fundamental mechanism for controlling the flow of genetic information. Dr. Mello's discovery is universally considered to be one of the most significant biomedical discoveries of the past decade, and it has opened up extraordinary opportunities for the development of new therapies for cancer, heart disease, illnesses, and many other conditions.

Dr. Mello is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and the Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine at UMass Medical School. His research and its international recognition by the Nobel Committee have brought great honor and pride to our city, Commonwealth, and Nation.

Dr. Mello received his B.S. from Brown University in 1982 and his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1990. He served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA, and joined the faculty of UMass in 1994.

I join Dr. Mello's many friends and colleagues in congratulating him for his landmark discovery, and I wish him well in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM K. PHILLIPS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize William K. Phillips, the longtime Director for the Small Business Administration's New Hampshire district office. Since 1981, Bill has led the agency through economic booms and slumps while demonstrating a sharp commitment to the business community in this state. On March 2 of this year, Bill will be retiring. His leadership will be missed, and I want to offer him my deepest thanks for not only the advice he has given me throughout the years but for everything he has done to make this State a better place to live.

Because of his unique professional resume, there are few people in the region who better understand the critical role small businesses play in a healthy economy and who know what entrepreneurs need to expand and thrive. Bill founded Benchmark Industries, a leader in resistance welding technology. He worked as senior vice-president of the Bank of New Hampshire, was the president of the former Londonderry Bank and Trust, and served on the board of directors of First NH Banks, which is now Citizens Bank of New Hampshire.

For the past two and half decades, Bill has been directing the SBA's operations in New Hampshire. It was in this role he made his name as a champion for small businesses. His dedication was most obvious during the banking and real estate crisis our State experienced during the early 1990s. Fortunately, Bill and his team at the SBA were here to meet this difficult challenge. Using their expertise and resources, the New Hampshire SBA under Bill Phillips relieved much of the anxiety business and homeowners were feeling and helped the State recover. New Hampshire today is a great place to work and start a company, and Bill can certainly feel proud of his role in strengthening our state's excellent reputation.

The definition of a vibrant economy goes beyond just a bunch of numbers and figures on a graph. What it really means is that people are working, improving the communities in which they live, building wealth, providing a better quality of life for their families and, in some cases, realizing life long dreams. Bill has been successful because he knows this and has always remembered that people, not statistics, are what matter. His experience and insights have served him well in the position of district director but, more importantly, they have benefitted New Hampshire. There are many businesses here, both small and large, which can be described as success stories because Bill took an interest in their future. Thank you, Bill. You have earned a long and healthy retirement.

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.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 287. A bill to prohibit the use of funds for an escalation of United States military forces in Iraq above the numbers existing as of January 9, 2007.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–303. A communication from the Chairman and CEO, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Disclosure and Reporting'' (RIN3052–AC11) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–304. A communication from the Regulatory Analyst, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fees for Rice Inspection Services'' (RIN0580–AA92) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–305. A communication from the Under Secretary of Agriculture (Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program'' (RIN0584–AD35) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–306. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's 2006 Commercial Activities Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–307. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Belarus that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–308. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' (71 FR 70904) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–309. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations'' (71 FR 70885) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–310. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' (71 FR 70894) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–311. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procedures for Corporate Debt Collection'' (RIN3064–AD12) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–312. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2007 Final Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Fisheries'' (RIN0648–AT60) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–313. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; Temporary Rules; Inseason Retention Limit Adjustment'' (ID No. 121206B) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–314. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Temporary Rules; Closure (Total Allowable Catch Harvested for Management Area 1B)'' (RIN0648–AT21) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–315. A communication from the Assistant Administrator of Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Rule and Temporary Rule for Emergency Action to Implement 2007 First Season Atlantic Shark Commercial Management Measures'' (ID No. 091106B) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–316. A communication from the Acting Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Temporary Rule; Closure (Rhode Island Commercial Bluefish Fishery)'' (ID No. 120406C–X) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–317. A communication from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–318. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''West Virginia Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Plan'' (WV–111–FOR) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–319. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Financial Accounting, Reporting and Records Retention Requirements Under the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 2005'' (FERC Docket No. RM06–11–000) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–320. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Policy, Management and Budget), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing efforts for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–321. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exception to the HIPAA Nondiscrimination Requirements for Certain Grandfathered Church Plans'' ((RIN1545–AY33)(TD 9299)) received on December 21, 2006; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–322. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Weighted Average Interest Rate Update'' (Notice 2007–12) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–323. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Bureau of Labor Statistics Price Indexes for Department Stores—November 2006'' (Rev. Rul. 2007–12) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–324. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Physician Group Practice Demonstration: First Evaluation Report''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–325. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to their study on barriers to participation of farmworkers in health programs; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–326. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Impact of Change in Medicare Payments for Part B Drugs''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–327. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2006–281—2006–303); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–328. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of action on a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Administration, received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–329. A communication from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a program that will be initiated for Colombia under the Agency's Bureau of Democracy; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–330. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to extending and amending certain Memorandums of Understanding; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–331. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports relative to post-liberation Iraq; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–332. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Food Labeling: Nutrition Labeling of Dietary Supplements on a 'Per Day' Basis'' (Docket No. 1998P–0043) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–333. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, two reports entitled ''The National Healthcare Quality Report 2006'' and ''The National Healthcare Disparities Report 2006''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–334. A communication from the Chair, Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program Board, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Jacob K. Javits Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–335. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the withdrawal of a nomination for the position of Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–336. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, the President's Pay Agent, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of locality-based comparability payments to categories of positions that are in more than one executive agency; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–337. A communication from the President, James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's annual report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–338. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report on Audit Follow-up for the period of April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–339. A communication from the Acting Senior Procurement Executive, Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Acquisition

Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2005–15'' (FAC 2005–15) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–340. A communication from the Federal Co-Chair, Denali Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–341. A communication from the Special Counsel, U.S. Office of Special Counsel, transmitting, a proposed bill to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Office for fiscal years 2008 through 2012; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–342. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's progress and status of compliance with certain privatization requirements; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–343. A communication from the Staff Director, United States Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the appointment of members to the Arizona Advisory Committee; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–344. A communication from the Clerk, Circuit and County Courts, transmitting, responses to the Minority Appointment Reporting Form for 2005; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC–345. A communication from the Director of Regulations Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of the Presumptive Period for Compensation for Gulf War Veterans'' (RIN2900–AM47) received on January 11, 2007; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–346. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''National Poultry Improvement Plan and Auxiliary Provisions'' (Docket No. APHIS–2006–0008) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–347. A communication from the Administrator, Housing and Community Facilities Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Direct Single Family Housing Loans and Grants'' (RIN0575–AC54) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–348. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone Regulations (including 5 regulations beginning with CGD13–06–052)'' (RIN1625–AA00) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–349. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Security Zone (including 5 regulations beginning with COTP Honolulu 06–008)'' (RIN1625–AA87) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–350. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulation; Annual Gasparilla Marine Parade, Hillsborough Bay, Tampa, FL'' ((RIN1625–AA08) (CGD07–05–156)) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–351. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Anchorage Regulations (including 2 regulations beginning with CGD08–06–026)'' (RIN1625–AA01) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–352. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operations (including 4 regulations beginning with CGD08–06–005)'' (RIN1625–AA09) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–353. A communication from the Chief of Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulated Navigation Area; East Rockaway Inlet to Atlantic Beach Bridge, Nassau County, Long Island, New York'' ((RIN1625–AA11) (CGD01–06–142)) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–354. A communication from the Assistant Secretary (Fish, Wildlife and Parks), Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Laguna Mountains Skipper (Pyrgus ruralis lagunae)'' (RIN1018–AU50) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–355. A communication from the Assistant Secretary (Fish, Wildlife and Parks), Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Astragalus ampullarioides (Shivwits Milk vetch) and Astragalus holmgreniorum (Holmgren Milk vetch)'' (RIN1018–AU45) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–356. A communication from the Assistant Secretary (Fish, Wildlife and Parks), Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Monardella linoides ssp. viminea (Willowy Monardella)'' (RIN1018–AT92) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–357. A communication from the Assistant Secretary (Fish, Wildlife and Parks), Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Canada Lynx'' (RIN1018–AU52) received on January 12, 2007; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–6. A resolution adopted by the Aurora Township Board of Trustees approving the election canvass results from a recent referendum; to the Committee on Armed Services.

POM–7. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Michigan relative to increasing funding to dredge Michigan's deep-draft Great Lakes ports and waterways; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 288

Whereas, Michigan is home to 40 deep-draft commercial ports on the Great Lakes, more than the other seven Great Lakes states combined; and

Whereas, in a typical year, these ports will handle in excess of 90 million tons of cargo, representing more than 50 percent of all the cargo moving on the Lakes, and the equivalent of 10 tons for each Michigan resident. The ports of Calcite, Cedarville, Drummond Island, Port Inland, and Presque Isle typically ship nearly 70 percent of the limestone moving on the Great Lakes. The ports of Marquette and Escanaba account for more than 20 percent of the Lakes' iron ore trade. The ports of Alpena and Charlevoix are the primary source of cement carried on the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, this waterborne commerce generates tens of thousands of family-sustaining jobs in Michigan and supports the state economy. For example, Michigan's steel and construction industries depend on Great Lakes shipping to deliver efficiently millions of tons of raw materials they need each year; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Transportation is promoting Short Sea Shipping—commercial waterborne transportation along the inland and coastal waterways—as a means of easing congestion on the nation's crowded highways and railbeds; and

Whereas, compared to other transportation modes, waterborne commerce provides environmental benefits, including fuel savings and fewer emissions. In addition, the efficiencies of waterborne commerce enable Michigan utilities to use cleaner-burning low-sulfur coal loaded in Wisconsin and shipped on the Great Lakes; and

Whereas, Michigan's deep-draft Great Lakes ports and waterways are long overdue for needed dredging to deepen them. For example, while currently under way, it had been 23 years since the Saginaw River turning basin was last dredged; and

Whereas, Michigan's economy is not reaping the full benefits of Great Lakes shipping due to the lack of necessary dredging. Ships cannot carry full loads and offer customers the best freight rates. The largest vessels delivering low-sulfur coal to Michigan are leaving behind as much as 4,500 tons each trip. Shortfalls in deliveries of iron ore, limestone, cement, and other cargos hamper Michigan employers' ability to compete; and

Whereas, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' budget for dredging Great Lakes ports and waterways has been inadequate for decades. This is true even though cargo is assessed a federal tax to fund dredging and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund has a surplus of nearly $2 billion; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize Congress to increase federal funding for dredging Michigan's Great Lakes deep-draft ports and waterways, using surplus monies from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge Congress to direct the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to clear the backlog of dredging projects at Michigan's ports and waterways and to then maintain those harbors and channels to project depth in the future; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United