

I do not believe there are others who wish to speak. Let me do a couple of unanimous consents.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REVIEW EXTENSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter from Senator LEVIN to me dated June 15, 2007.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, June 15, 2007.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID: On June 4, 2007, S. 1538, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, was referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee pursuant to paragraph 3(b) of S. Res. 400 of the 94th Congress, as amended by S. Res. 445 of the 108th Congress. In accordance with that resolution, I now request an additional extension of five days to enable the Committee to complete its review of the bill.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

CARL LEVIN,
Chairman.

REMEMBERING SENATOR CRAIG THOMAS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden passing of my colleague from Wyoming, Senator Craig Thomas. The loss we all feel at his passing Craig is tempered by the happy memories I have of working with him on so many issues of mutual interest. His efforts and his leadership on the panels on which we served together—the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Agriculture Committee, and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee—will remain foremost in my memory. I particularly admired his staunch advocacy for the needs of rural communities and farmers. Craig brought a special passion and expertise to issues affecting ranching families. His focus on their unique needs spanned the trade, economic, environmental, and public lands management issues of rural communities.

Craig brought to Congress his vision for the needs of Wyoming and rural States, and he became a strong advocate of effective resource and energy policies. I am pleased to have partnered with him in applying technologies to improving our Nation's energy generation. Although he lived his life modestly, he became a leader in national park stewardship, and the

American people owe him a debt of gratitude for his promotion of the underserved national parks system. I also appreciated his long and thoughtful counsel on ways to update the Endangered Species Act.

In recent months, Craig took a prime role on the Finance Committee in working to simplify the Federal Tax Code and improve entitlement and health care assistance to the least fortunate. As one who took to heart the importance of protecting the taxpayers' dollars, Craig was a strong proponent of restoring the sustainability of our Nation's welfare system. And Craig understood that economic development in rural States like Wyoming was inextricably linked to trade promotion that ensured open and fair markets abroad. I will miss his stalwart and consistent advocacy for farming communities as the Senate considered trade legislation.

As a man who represented a small State in population, Craig towered large over the landscape of thoughtful conservative Members of Congress. I think a fitting tribute and legacy to our late friend would be to adopt his resolution making July 28, National Day of the Cowboy. My thoughts and prayers are with Craig's family and friends. I will miss my good friend and colleague.

RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND HEALTHY FAMILIES ACT

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, yesterday, just days before Father's Day, I was pleased to join my colleague and good friend Senator BAYH in reintroducing the Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act. Within the next few days companion legislation will be introduced in the House of Representatives by Congresswoman CARSON of Indiana and my friend from Chicago, Congressman DANNY DAVIS.

It is time to address the crisis of absentee fathers. We must ask ourselves why more than a quarter of all American families have only one parent present, and more than a third live without their father. We must get a handle on why 40 percent of the children in America who live without their father have not seen him in over a year.

There is no question that most single mothers are doing a heroic job raising their kids. They are working two and three jobs, dropping their kids off at school or daycare or with friends or relatives, responding to their illnesses, and, quite frankly, doing the work that is often a challenge these days for even two parents. My appreciation for single mothers is unwavering. My own father was not around when I was growing up, and my mother and grandparents had to step up to the plate to fill my father's role.

But most people would agree that children are almost always better off with both parents contributing their fair share, and the data shows this.

Children are more likely to be poor and to do worse in school without both parents in their life. And a healthy relationship between children and their father is important to healthy growth and development.

The Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act addresses these problems by removing government barriers to healthy relationships and responsible fatherhood. It improves the economic stability of parents who accept their parenting responsibility. Our bill sets a high standard for parents and helps them to reach it with incentives, support, and tougher enforcement of child support obligations.

It takes courage to raise a child. We can't simply legislate that courage and expect all parents to get and stay married. We can't legislate good parenting skills or good behavior role models. We can't legislate economic success for all families. But we can help those who are trying to do the right thing and eliminate some of the roadblocks they face. And we can provide some tools to help these courageous parents succeed.

This act removes government roadblocks by eliminating a perverse disincentive to marriage in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. Congress is sending the wrong message by telling States that they may be penalized for serving married couples. There should be equality for two-parent families receiving TANF, and States should not be required to meet a separate work participation rate for the two-parent families in their caseload.

This act also makes vital improvements to the child support system, which affects noncustodial fathers as much or more than any other government program. It will restore funding for child support enforcement and require States to pass the full amount of child support collected along to the family. Research has confirmed that a father is more likely to pay child support if he knows that the money is going to his kids.

We also require States to review the amount of child support arrears that are owed to the state, and we clarify existing state authority to forgive such arrearages. A father who earns only \$10,000 per year, and who has \$20,000 of child support debt because the State billed him for the Medicaid birthing costs of his child, is probably going to work underground and avoid paying child support altogether. It is in the best interest of all members of his family that a father has an incentive to get a legitimate job and to begin taking care of his family.

States are also provided funding to assess any other barriers to healthy family formation or sustainable employment created by their child support and criminal justice systems. They are encouraged to establish commissions to propose state law changes that would be in the best interest of children.

Another important aspect of this act is fostering economic stability for fathers and their families. This act establishes three employment demonstration programs. One program is supervised by courts or state child support agencies that serve parents who are determined to be in need of employment services in order to pay child support obligations. The court can arrange temporary employment services for the father rather than throwing him in jail for nonpayment of support. The second is a transitional jobs program that combines temporary subsidized employment with activities that help fathers develop skills and remove barriers to employment. The third program establishes public-private partnerships to provide fathers with "career pathways" that help them advance from jobs at low skill levels through jobs that require greater skills and provide family-sustaining wages and benefits.

These programs are modeled on successful initiatives in Indiana and Illinois and will be subject to rigorous evaluations to ensure the goals are being achieved.

In both the Illinois State Senate and the Senate, I have led efforts to expand the earned-income tax credit, EITC, which is one of the most successful antipoverty programs in the country to date. It rewards work and supplements wages that may be too low to support a family. The Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act would double the number of working single adults eligible for EITC benefits, increase the benefit, reward and support parents who are current on their child support payments, and reduce the EITC marriage penalty which hurts low-income families. Under this plan, full-time workers making minimum wage would get an EITC benefit up to \$555, more than three times greater than the \$175 benefit they get today. If the workers are responsibly supporting their children on child support, this bill would give those workers a benefit of \$1,110.

Additionally, this bill improves the Responsible Fatherhood and Marriage Promotion programs that were funded by the Deficit Reduction Act. Funding is increased, and all Fatherhood and Marriage programs are required to coordinate with domestic violence prevention services to reduce instances of domestic violence and promote healthy, nonviolent relationships.

I would like take a final few moments to talk about the breakdown of families in the African-American community, because the epidemic of absentee fathers runs deep. Today, around 70 percent of Black children are born outside of marriage. Of the 30 percent born to married parents, more than half experience a divorce. That means that about 85 percent of Black children spend some or all of their childhood in a home without their father. As our children grow up, statistics continue to paint a bleak picture. Fewer than 6 of every 10 young Black men are em-

ployed, and in some of our urban and rural areas the rate of unemployment is over 50 percent. Roughly one-third of young Black men are involved in some way with the criminal justice system. And young Black men have the lowest educational attainment among Black and White men and women.

These factors contribute to low marriage rates among African-American men. But by age 34, nearly half of black men are fathers. And roughly two-thirds of all Black men leaving prison are fathers. As hard as some of these men try, it is likely that their children will also be denied the advantages of healthy parental relationships and married families. Their children will be more likely to live in poverty and to become young, unmarried parents themselves. Their children's life chances will be limited. The cycle of poverty and despair will continue.

It is important to remember that there is no segment of our population no income level, no religion, and no race—that is immune to these challenges. Some segments of the population are worse off than others. However, I believe there is reason for hope. At the time of the birth of the child, most fathers are close to both the mother and their child. The challenge is to maintain healthy relationships between parents and to strengthen the early bonds between fathers and their children. The challenge is to improve economic opportunity for all parents so they can support themselves and their families. The challenge is to break the cycle by strengthening America's most vulnerable and fragile families.

That is what this bill does, and it is fully paid for by revenue raised by closing tax loopholes. This is a solid first step forward in removing government barriers to healthy family formation, and addressing the crisis of fatherhood among our Nation's low-income populations. I urge my colleagues to support the Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2007.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, at a time when we are witnessing the devastating consequences of ethnic and sectarian division in places such as Iraq and Darfur, I believe it is vital to recognize the efforts of those who work to promote peace and reconciliation. In that spirit, I wish to commend the 53 Nobel laureates who signed an appeal by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity in support of "tolerance, contact and cooperation between Turks and Armenians."

In their appeal, the laureates call on both Turks and Armenians to take the steps necessary to open the Turkish-Armenian border, generate confidence through civil society cooperation, improve official contacts, and allow basic freedoms. As part of this commitment, the laureates call on Turkey to end all forms of discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities and abolish

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. This provision has been used to take legal action against those who speak out about the Armenian genocide, including Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk and recently murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. There is no question that article 301 contributed to the toxic political environment that led up to Mr. Dink's assassination in January.

The laureates also note that "Turks and Armenians have a huge gap in perceptions over the Armenian Genocide." To address this chasm of understanding, they call for further study and dissemination of a report prepared by the International Center for Transitional Justice. That impartial analysis of the massacres perpetrated against Armenians in the early 20th century concluded that the killings "can be said to include all the elements of the crime of genocide . . ." This finding was corroborated by the International Association of Genocide Scholars, which issued its own statement in 1997 to reaffirm "that the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide." The existence of these independent evaluations of the Armenian genocide and relevant international law should provide an opportunity for both countries to accept the verdict of history and move forward.

Mr. President, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has unanimously passed S. Res. 65, a resolution echoing many of the sentiments expressed by the laureates and honoring the life of Hrant Dink, a leading proponent of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation up until the time of his brutal murder. It is my hope that the full Senate will adopt this important measure without further delay.

I congratulate the Wiesel Foundation for its work to produce this important statement and request consent that it be printed in the RECORD. I hope that the words of these Nobel laureates will encourage the people of both nations to recognize and ultimately transcend the legacy of the Armenian genocide. Once this occurs, I have every confidence that the people of Armenia and Turkey will be able to rebuild the ties between their countries and forge a new, enduring peace.

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

THE ELIE WIESEL
FOUNDATION FOR HUMANITY,
New York, NY, April 9, 2007.

DEAR FRIENDS: We, the undersigned Nobel laureates, issue this appeal directly to the peoples of Turkey and Armenia. Mindful of the sacrifice paid by Hrant Dink, the ethnic Armenian editor of *Agos* in Turkey, who was assassinated on January 19, 2007, and whose death was mourned by both Turks and Armenians, we believe that the best way to pay tribute to Mr. Dink is through service to his life's work safeguarding freedom of expression and fostering reconciliation between Turks and Armenians.