

and damaging effects that the recession had on the people of my state. I don't want to see our industries fail, thousands of people lose their jobs, or the kind of fear, uncertainty, and hopelessness that defined those times.

Nothing matters more to me than helping West Virginia families hold on to their life savings, their jobs, their homes, their retirement, and their hopes for the future.

Failure to act will severely hurt West Virginia families and that is a risk I am not willing to take.

I also want to be clear that there are likely more tough times ahead. This plan is intended to prevent an economic catastrophe, but it alone will not put us on the path to prosperity.

We still must turn our attention to broader economic recovery, from healthcare, to increased wages, to expanded job opportunities, to major public infrastructure investments, to restoring fairness to our tax system so that the middle class can once again prosper.

The people of West Virginia deserve lasting solutions and I will fight every day to make sure this happens.

TIMBER TAX PROVISIONS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I am concerned that this stabilization package, which includes package of business tax incentives, does not extend the timber tax provisions that were enacted in sections 15311 and 15312 of the farm bill and which are scheduled to expire in May 2009. I and others have long advocated the enactment of provisions that would permanently reform the tax rules for timber income. Given budget constraints, as part of the farm bill, we established the new rules for 1 year as a first step. It is important that the provisions not be allowed to lapse. Otherwise, our good work could be undone because we will revert to the same situation as before in which companies that harvest timber are subject to higher tax rates simply because of their form of business organization.

As we consider tax extenders legislation, my specific concern is that, by extending a variety of expiring tax provisions until the end of 2009 but not extending the timber tax provisions, we may create the impression that the timber tax provisions are not likely to be extended. Because of this concern, I am interested in learning, from the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee, about their plans for considering an extension of the timber tax provisions.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I agree with Senator LINCOLN. We made good progress in enacting the timber tax provisions in the farm bill, but we must take the important next step of making the provisions permanent or, at the very least, extending them.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I would like to agree with the points made by my colleagues. The timber tax provisions are critically important to Washington and other States that rely on timber jobs, and the provisions

must be extended promptly. I have discussed this matter with the chairman of the Finance Committee, and he has assured me that he will work to extend the provisions early next year.

Mr. BAUCUS. I am happy to respond to the Senators from Arkansas, Oregon, and Washington, whom I have worked with for several years on this issue. They and others have persuaded me that the timber tax provisions are fair and are important. That is why I strongly supported including the provisions in the farm bill.

That said, I believe that the timber tax provisions are in a different category than the extenders that are included in the current bill. The extenders in this bill are provisions that have been in the Tax Code for some time, and most already have expired. The timber tax provisions, in contrast, are new—enacted earlier this year—and, as the Senator said, they do not expire until May 2009. In light of that, although I strongly support the timber tax provisions, I believe that it is better to address them early next year rather than as part of this bill. I anticipate that we will be considering tax legislation early in the next Congress. I will work with Senator LINCOLN, Senator MURRAY, and other interested Senators to see that the timber tax provisions are extended.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I agree with the chairman of the Finance Committee. I support the timber tax provisions and believe they should be made permanent or at least extended. I also agree with Senator BAUCUS that we have time to consider the matter early next year, and I will work with him to pass a timely extension.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the intent in section 105(c) of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, "Regulatory Modernization Report," of the important requirements for analysis of regulation of the over-the-counter swaps market and for recommendations regarding the enhancement of the clearing and settlement of over-the-counter swaps.

The OTC swaps market is enormous, estimated to be \$600 trillion. This market is primarily made up of interest rate swaps and Credit default swaps. Corporations, banks, insurance companies, GSEs, pension funds, State and local governments and endowments all participate in the OTC swaps market.

The OTC swaps market is a "bilateral contract" market which does not involve an exchange or a clearinghouse. It is directly between two parties, which results in each party bearing "counter party credit risk." In other words, if one of the two parties goes bankrupt or fails to pay, the other party can suffer a complete loss on the transaction.

Since the OTC swaps market has impacts on the financial system, it is appropriate and timely to look at it carefully. Some of the largest OTC swaps market dealers and market participants have been merged in federally ar-

ranged transactions into stronger market participants, taken into Government conservatorships or receiverships or provided a line of credit directly by the Federal Government. These actions were taken, in part, because of concerns by Federal authorities about either the losses in their OTC swaps books and or the potential cascading effect on OTC swaps market if such an entity failed.

The Treasury Report should look at the OTC swaps market generally and the current and potential options for improvements in clearing contracts, such as through a Federally licensed clearinghouse, with a view to whether it would materially lower credit risk. The Report should consider issues such as the processing of confirmations, margining, collateral management, market access, transparency in pricing, and safety and soundness concerns.

Mr. President, I want to acknowledge the efforts of the many staff members who have labored almost around the clock over the past several weeks to help craft this legislation.

FROM THE BANKING COMMITTEE

Amy Friend, Dean Shahinian, Jonathan Miller, Aaron Klein, Julie Chon, Jenn Fogel-Bublick, Lynsey Graham, Brian Filipowich, Drew Colbert.

FROM SENATOR GREGG'S COMMITTEE AND PERSONAL STAFF

Denzel McGuire, Jim Hearn, Allison Parent, Christopher Gahan.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Russ Sullivan, Cathy Koch, Mark Prater.
FROM SENATOR CONRAD'S BUDGET COMMITTEE AND PERSONAL STAFF

Mary Naylor, Tom Mahr, Lisa Konwinski, Matt Salomon, John Righter.

FROM THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Bruce Cohen, Kristine Lucius.

FROM THE MAJORITY LEADER'S OFFICE

Bruce King, Mark Wetjen, Gary Myrick, Randy Devalk.

FROM THE REPUBLICAN LEADER'S OFFICE

Rohit Kumar, Derek Kan.

FROM THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Laura Ayoud, Rob Grant, Didem Nisanci with Senator REID, David Stoopler with Senator SCHUMER.

Last but not least, our extraordinary Floor Staff, led by Lula Davis and Dave Chiappa.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

CHUCK HAGEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with the end of a session fast approaching, it is time once again to say farewell to some of our favorite colleagues in the Senate. And today that includes our friend, the senior Senator from Nebraska.

CHUCK HAGEL's long record of service is well known to many. What some may not know is that that record of service long predates his time in Washington.

Responsibility was thrust upon CHUCK at an early age. A fourth generation Nebraskan, CHUCK became the man of the house at the young age of 16 after the death of his father.

And he accepted the responsibility head on, working hard to support his mom and younger brothers.

But even then working hard was nothing new to CHUCK HAGEL, who had taken his first job delivering papers at the age of 7.

As a young man, CHUCK answered the call and volunteered to serve in Vietnam, and CHUCK's fellow soldiers turned to him for leadership.

One of the soldiers who served right alongside CHUCK was his younger brother Tom. By coincidence, the Hagel brothers ended up in the same unit and rode together in the same armored personnel carrier.

In a defining act of heroism, CHUCK once dragged his brother out of that carrier after it had struck a landmine and burst into flames. The blast left CHUCK badly burned and ruptured both his eardrums. Yet despite serious injuries to himself, he brought his brother through enemy fire to safety.

After returning home from Vietnam, CHUCK worked his way through college and got his first taste of Washington working for Omaha Congressman John McColister.

Later, CHUCK would show his drive and his leadership in the business world. Taking a risk, he sank his entire savings into a business venture that eventually paid off.

And then, 12 years ago, he took another gamble. And we are glad he did.

A political newcomer, CHUCK defeated Nebraska's sitting State attorney general in a primary, and then a popular incumbent governor in the general election for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

I will note, Mr. President, that the governor he beat is now the junior Senator from Nebraska. And in a sign of CHUCK's character and commitment to the people of Nebraska, the two former rivals have worked in tandem on many issues for the good of the people of their State.

I know Senator NELSON would agree that Senator HAGEL's departure is a great loss for this Chamber and for the people of the Cornhusker State.

CHUCK's advocacy for the people of Nebraska was reaffirmed 6 years ago when the voters sent him back to Washington for a second term.

In a sign of his effectiveness and his popularity, he won reelection to the Senate by the biggest margin Nebraska has ever seen.

The one-time political newcomer trounced his opponent, winning 83 percent of the vote—and all 93 counties in the State.

In two terms in the Senate, CHUCK has earned the respect of his colleagues and risen to national prominence as a clear voice on foreign policy and national security. He has consistently fought to expand free trade, particularly with Vietnam.

CHUCK's stature as a leading voice in foreign affairs has earned him a reputation, in just 12 years in the Senate, as one of Nebraska's great statesmen.

This is a tribute to his intelligence, hard work, and devotion to a country that he has served his entire adult life.

Elaine and I have enjoyed getting to know CHUCK, Lilibet, and their family over the years. I know CHUCK's a proud dad. And his kids should be proud of their dad.

CHUCK, it has been an honor, and a pleasure, to serve with you. We all wish you well in whatever future endeavors you choose to take on.

I am confident that, even though Nebraska is known as a flat State, whoever succeeds CHARLES TIMOTHY HAGEL in the U.S. Senate is going to have a very steep hill to climb.

LARRY CRAIG

Mr. President, one of the great sticking points for the framers of the U.S. Constitution was how small States would be represented in the new Government.

In the end, the compromise that gave small and big States equal representation in the U.S. Senate broke the logjam, paved the way for ratification, and became one of the most distinctive—and best—features of our democracy.

It has ensured that the interests of all Americans, including those who live in remote or secluded corners of the country, are felt in the halls of power. And, throughout the life of our country, it has meant that men and women who understood those interests and who could communicate them with clarity and purpose would always have a central place in the U.S. Senate.

For nearly two decades, LARRY CRAIG has been that person for the people of Idaho—a fierce advocate and an effective legislator who understands the needs of his State, and always delivered.

The grandson of a homesteader, Senator CRAIG was born on a ranch north of Boise and attended public schools. He graduated from the University of Idaho in 1969 and may have been its most prominent alumnus before the world got to know the current Governor of Alaska a few weeks ago.

After college, Senator CRAIG served in the National Guard, worked as a farmer-rancher, and was elected to the Idaho senate in 1974. Seven years later, Idaho voters sent him to Washington.

After a decade in the House, they sent him to the Upper Chamber. And he has been fighting their battles here in the Senate ever since.

One of his favorite targets over the years are the Western lands policies favored by big city environmentalists but opposed by the native Idahoans who cherish and live off the land.

He fought revisions of the Mining Act of 1872, and a Clinton-era proposal to introduce grizzlies into Idaho's Bitterroot Range.

Over the years, he's fought anyone who tried to impose rules and restrictions on land use that natives oppose. Those battles heated up in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2005 Kelo ruling. And over the last 3 years, he's fought

hard to protect the private property rights of farmers and ranchers, who have been left especially vulnerable by the Court's Kelo decision.

Senator CRAIG took a lead role in the Farm Bill debate over the last 2 years, making sure it included funds to support specialty crop producers in Idaho, one of the Nation's top producers of specialty crops, and about one-third of the Nation's potatoes. And he played a vital role in smoothing the way for the bill's final passage earlier this summer.

As chairman of the Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee, Senator CRAIG fought to reform the Nation's Forest Service, which drastically reduced the timber harvest on public lands during the Clinton Administration, cutting into the livelihoods of Idahoans in small towns across the State.

For municipalities that couldn't recoup the losses from lost timber revenue, Senator CRAIG reached across the aisle and worked with Senator WYDEN to find compensation that helped them cope. It was a characteristic gesture of bipartisan work, and one he's employed repeatedly over the years.

He's been a strong defender of free trade.

As chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, he sponsored a bill that would enable seniors to buy State-approved long-term care policies.

And he has been a good friend to our Nation's veterans, serving as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

A new tower at Boise's airport would not have been built without Senator CRAIG's help. Neither would the new VA clinic that opened in Caldwell just last year. In a long Senate career, Senator CRAIG has fought with clarity and conviction for Idahoans. Along the way, he has been a friend of veterans, children seeking a home through adoption, and thousands of American farmers and ranchers, particularly those in the Pacific Northwest.

And, along with three other Senate colleagues who've moved on, he entertained us as a member of the Singing Senators.

With Senator CRAIG's retirement, the last of the Singing Senators will have left the building.

And the people of Idaho will have lost one of their greatest champions.

JOHN WARNER

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, considering the long and distinguished history of the State of Virginia, it is quite an accomplishment to be the state's second-longest serving Senator. But, that is just one of Senator JOHN WARNER's many accomplishments.

Senator WARNER has been serving his country since 1945 when he enlisted in the Navy. Later, he joined the Marine Corps and served in Korea. During the Vietnam war, he served in the Department of the Navy, ultimately attaining the position of Secretary.

Senator WARNER's service and knowledge of the military have guided his work in the Senate. He has served as chairman of the Armed Services Committee and has guided many bills

through the Senate. His commitment to the men and women in uniform has never wavered, and he has used his position to make sure that they have the resources they need to complete their mission. Debating a Defense authorization bill without the leadership of Senator WARNER will be a new experience for most of us.

On a daily basis, Senator WARNER provided a fine example for other Senators. For the Senate to function properly, there must be comity in the body. Senator WARNER was courteous and always willing to settle disagreements in a way that befits Senators. The Senate cannot work on behalf of Americans if Senators are unwilling to work in a courteous and bipartisan manner. Senator WARNER understood that fact well.

Senator WARNER has served in the Senate for 30 years, winning five elections. Many Americans have never seen a Senate without JOHN WARNER, and many Virginians have always had JOHN WARNER as their Senator.

When JOHN leaves the Senate, the body will lose not only a distinguished legislator but also a consummate gentleman.

CHUCK HAGEL

Mr. President, when the 111th Congress convenes next year, the Senate will be without Senator CHUCK HAGEL. Senator HAGEL has decided to retire from the Senate after two terms. His career in public service, however, long predates his service in Congress.

Like many public servants, Senator HAGEL entered politics after first serving the Nation in the armed forces. He saw combat in Vietnam and served with valor, receiving two Purple Hearts among other decorations. He would later serve as a congressional staff member, and in 1981, President Reagan tapped him as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration.

When Senator HAGEL came to the Senate, his actions often reflected his experience as a combat veteran. He did what he believed was best for the men and women in uniform, and he defended his positions forcefully.

Senator HAGEL has continued to protect and defend the country, notably through his work on the Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees. He had strong opinions, and he was never shy about letting them be known.

I wish Senator HAGEL all the best in his pursuits after the Senate. I expect that he will devote much of his time to his wife Lilibet and their family, but I imagine he will save some time to follow his Nebraska Cornhuskers.

PETE DOMENICI

Mr. President, the Senate will be a different place when Senator DOMENICI departs at the end of this session. I say that as a colleague and as a neighbor in the great Southwest.

Senator DOMENICI has served in this body for six terms, longer than any Senator in the history of New Mexico. Judging from the energy that he has displayed during the past months, he could serve another; but he has decided to retire, and it is well deserved.

During his time in the Senate, Senator DOMENICI has been involved in some of the most difficult issues to confront the body. Recently, he has spoken eloquently about the financial stabilization plan the Senate just passed; and earlier in the summer, he was one of the more vocal advocates of securing this nation's energy future. Of course, he has long supported reducing the country's dependence on foreign sources of energy, but this summer he addressed the issue with renewed vigor.

Senator DOMENICI has been of great help to his neighbors in Arizona. Without his assistance, we would not have an Arizona Water Settlements Act, one of the landmark settlements in the history of the country. He has also been working hard on a water settlement for New Mexico. It won't be completed before he leaves the Senate, but Senator DOMENICI has been instrumental in getting the settlement as far as it has.

Senator DOMENICI should also be proud that legislation he has worked on for some time now is poised for passage. Mental health parity has long been a priority for Senator DOMENICI, and it appears he will be able to add it to his long list of accomplishments in the Senate.

When a Senator has served as long as Senator DOMENICI, it is difficult to imagine the Senate without him. My Senate colleagues and I will miss PETE and Nancy, and we will remember his legacy of leadership and years of distinguished service to the nation.

LARRY CRAIG

Mr. President, five colleagues on my side of the aisle are retiring from the Senate at the end of this session. They have served for many years, and I have come to know each of them very well.

Senator LARRY CRAIG and I served in the House together until 1990 when Senator CRAIG moved to the Senate. I joined him four years later. We represent Western States, so we have had occasion to work together on issues that are important to the American West.

In his position on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, he has defended property rights and stood for the prudent use of our natural resources. He has also been a strong advocate of Americans' second amendment rights. And, as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee—for a time the ranking member—he has worked to ensure that veterans receive the benefits they were promised.

Senator CRAIG has held a number of positions among Senate Republicans. He served as chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, and he participated in the musical effort of Senators Trent Lott, John Ashcroft, Jim Jeffords, and himself—the Singing Senators.

After almost three decades in the U.S. Congress, Senator CRAIG is now leaving public service. Idaho has lost a great Senator who always looked out for the interests of the State and its citizens. He has a great record of ac-

complishment on which to reflect—numerous legislative victories and, of course, one CD.

We will miss Senator CRAIG in the Senate, especially the spirited remarks he so often delivered on the Senate floor.

I wish LARRY and Suzanne all the best and hope they have many happy moments with their wonderful family.

WAYNE ALLARD

Mr. President, as this session draws to a close and as we look forward to the 111th Congress, I would be remiss if I didn't pay tribute to my colleagues who are retiring after years of service to their country.

I have known Senator WAYNE ALLARD since we served in the House together.

Senator ALLARD served with distinction on the Armed Services Committee, and we have worked together to make sure that this country is prepared to meet national security challenges. Both of us believe strongly in President Reagan's famous axiom, "peace through strength."

Recently, we worked together to secure funding to study the possibility of basing missile defenses in space. As a result, policymakers will finally begin to have the information necessary to debate the overall feasibility of a space-based missile defense layer. The space threat will only grow in the years ahead, and I am pleased that I was able to work with Senator ALLARD to make small, but measurable progress towards better defending the nation.

Senator ALLARD is the model legislator. He's not a professional politician, but a veteranarian by trade. He understands that the money we spend in Washington is not the government's money, but the taxpayers'. And he proves it, returning over \$4 million of his office's funds to the government's coffers. His votes are based on principle, not politics.

I wish Senator ALLARD all the best. Colorado has lost a great legislator, but I am sure that his wife Joan, his children, and his five grandsons will be glad to have him at home more often.

JOHN WARNER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I rise in tribute to the senior Senator from Virginia, the honorable JOHN WARNER. Senator WARNER is without a doubt one of the finest Senators this chamber has ever had, and the Senate will be a lesser place without him.

Senator WARNER is truly a great American—a patriot who has devoted 45 years of his life in service to his country. One of America's Greatest Generation, he served his country honorably during World War Two, enlisting before he was 18 years old. When war in Korea broke out, he again answered his country's call to arms. After earning his law degree, he served as the Under Secretary and later the Secretary of the Navy, again serving with great distinction and integrity.

In 1979, Senator WARNER came to the Senate to begin his 30 year Senate career. As in every one of his endeavors

before, he immediately made an impact, eventually serving with distinction as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is in this capacity that I have had the great privilege of working with him and getting to know him over the last 4 years.

Senator WARNER's leadership on the Armed Services Committee has been invaluable. There is no doubt that when he speaks, all are wise to listen. He provides unwavering, courageous leadership that all lean upon. There is never any doubt to his motives. His only motive is to look out for our men and women in uniform and ensure our Nation's defense. His first priority is his country.

Senator WARNER has never failed to lead courageously. At times, some of the positions he has taken have been politically unpopular, but his latest reelection—with over 82 percent of the vote—attests that his constituents know he is only dedicated to doing one thing—the right thing. In times of crisis, there is no doubt that Senator WARNER becomes a rock that we all lean upon when we face the most challenging issues of our time. He was one of the leaders that worked on the Military Commissions Act and the incredibly difficult and contentious issue of detainees. Once again, just this year, he led again, this time by becoming one of the Gang of 20, trying to provide bipartisan solutions to American's energy issues. And, of course, it took his leadership to bring about passage of the Defense authorization bill this year, a bill that by tradition is passed each year, but which was looking extremely doubtful of passage for the first time in decades.

I have only one regret regarding my service with Senator WARNER, and that is I did not have the opportunity to serve with him longer. One of the finest statesmen of his time, I am proud to call him my friend. I aspire to his example and his name belongs in the pantheon of the Senate's greatest figures.

Last, I would like to tell him thank you. Thank you for your great service to our great Republic. Thank you for the untold sacrifices you and your family have made along the way in your 45 years of public service. Thank you for your integrity, patriotism, leadership, and honor.

As I noted before, the Senate will be a lesser place when he leaves, but I wish Senator WARNER a fond farewell and Godspeed.

JOHN WARNER

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, as the Senate completes its work for the year, we have also reached the end of the distinguished career of the senior Senator from Virginia, JOHN WILLIAM WARNER, Jr.

In their wisdom, our Founders created the Senate to be a body like no other on Earth to harness the special wisdom that experience can bring. I think they had people like JOHN WARNER in mind as the kind of person who would best serve the Nation in the Senate.

Senator WARNER has lived a life of faithful, skillful service to his country. He served in World War II, enlisting as a 17-year-old. He interrupted his law school studies to also serve in Korea. He served as an assistant U.S. attorney. And for 5 years he served in the Secretariat of the Navy, leading the department from 1972 to 1974. That seems like a full career in itself, but it was just a prologue to five terms in the Senate.

Over three decades, JOHN WARNER has worked with great energy, skill, and wisdom to protect the national security of the United States. The Department of Defense is a massive organization with a budget that staggers the imagination. But Senator WARNER has devoted himself to mastering the details of the DOD and been a relentless advocate for its modernization and continuous improvement in effectiveness. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated tremendous caring for the millions of men and women who have worn the country's uniform and been their best friend on Capitol Hill.

Senator WARNER has been a counselor and mentor to me in my first 6 years here, and on behalf of the people I represent in Minnesota I thank him for his counsel to me on how to do this job right. He taught me that just as the human body has its bones and vital organs under the skin and out of sight, the most important work of the Senate takes place away from the TV lights and the press conferences.

The day-to-day work of achieving compromise on hundreds and hundreds of issues that come before us is where the real difference can be made, and JOHN WARNER excelled at that work.

Another Virginian, George Washington, said during the darkest days of the American Revolution that, "spirit and perseverance have done wonders in all ages." Today I honor the spirit of patriotism that has always motivated JOHN WARNER and his perseverance through more than five decades that has made this a stronger and freer nation. May his sterling example of service inspire all of us to serve as nobly and as skillfully as he has done.

PETE DOMENICI

Mr. President, one of the lessons of our history is that America is not great because our leaders were somehow superhuman, but because regular people enjoy extraordinary freedom and use it to pursue ideals beyond their individual concerns. Senator PETE DOMENICI is a wonderful example of this unique brand of American greatness, and as he completes his service to the Senate, I wanted to take a few minutes of the Senate's time to honor him and thank him.

PETE DOMENICI was born to Italian immigrants during the Great Depression in Albuquerque, NM, which was a long cultural distance from Washington, DC. He worked in his family grocery businesses and played for a farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers, which is enough to endear him to me

right there. He became a junior high math teacher and then earned a law degree.

He served in local government for 6 years before his first election to the Senate in 1972. And he has served six full terms in the Senate, which is amazing in and of itself. But what is perhaps most amazing is he has remained the regular person he was brought up to be in Albuquerque and has always applied his commonsense values to the most complex national problems.

Senator DOMENICI has been a stalwart in the difficult job of trying to curb Washington's seemingly endless appetite for more spending. Politics tends to be a business in which all the rewards flow to those who say "yes." But for the sake of the taxpayers and children and grandchildren of ours who cannot yet speak, PETE DOMENICI has been willing to say "no" to more spending in order to say "yes" to their economic future.

Senator DOMENICI has made a tremendous contribution to the advancement of science by focusing resources and efforts to understand the human brain. For decades from now, a wide spectrum of discoveries and therapies to improve human life will come out of his insistence on progress of the basic science of brain research. It has been a great privilege to work with him closely on his signature issue for the last several years: mental health parity. His tireless commitment to ending insurance discrimination, and willingness to share his own family's struggles, has broken down barriers to treatment and brought hope to millions of Americans living with mental illness.

The legislative process has regrettably become more divisive and partisan over the last decade, but through it all Senator DOMENICI has been a role model of civility, diligence, and goodwill. The Senate was built to achieve consensus on the great issues of the day, and PETE DOMENICI was always focused on what we could get done, rather than on who got the credit.

His ability and willingness to find consensus and produce legislation the American people need has been showcased by his 30 years of service on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. It is a testament to his abilities that as either chairman or ranking member, PETE DOMENICI has guided three energy bills into law in the last 3 years: the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. PETE found a way to cut through a tough, partisan climate in the Senate to address our dependence on foreign oil.

Personally he has been a connecting point for me with the great compromisers and policy experts of the Senate's recent past. And he has always reminded me that we are not Senators who happen to be people; we are people who happened to be Senators for a

time, and we need to nurture the roots of faith, family, and friendship that give us life.

PETE DOMENICI is a great American success story, and it has been an honor and privilege to serve with him in Washington. His influence on me will continue long after he has left this body.

CHUCK HAGEL

Mr. President, one of the first experiences of a new Senator is to open their drawer in their desk here on the floor and learn a special lesson in Senate history. Traditionally, Senators do what we prevent sixth grade boys from doing: we write our names into our desks. When I first opened my drawer here, I saw decades of people who had occupied this particular desk, and it told me that for however long I am here, I am a temporary occupant. Many came before me and many will come after me. So at each 2-year interval, we say goodbye to many of our colleagues and await the new.

I will be particularly sad to say farewell to the Senior Senator from Nebraska, Mr. HAGEL. He came to this body with an extraordinary career in communications, finance, and international business. He was like a Senator of a bygone era, when Members of this body often were the national experts in their fields.

He made a tremendous contribution to the world of the Senate because he had first-hand knowledge of the dynamism and transformational nature of the global economy all around us. He is the kind of decisionmaker that is shaping the new economy and it has been so valuable to have him among us.

CHUCK HAGEL's whole life expresses his conviction that the world can and should be a better place, and it will not get that way by itself. He is fully engaged in life-long effort to make the world a better place, and he applies every waking hour to the quest. I know that "retirement" is not the word for his departure from this place—in a way he is released from this responsibility to pursue his passion of public service in multiple other ways. He is the embodiment of the ideal of a life of self-sacrifice for the betterment of others.

Senator HAGEL brought his analytical, probing mind to the Foreign Relations Committee, where I served with him these last 6 years. His contributions to the committee's work were always thoughtful and challenging—and that was just his Halloween costumes.

CHUCK HAGEL is one of the most energetic people I have ever met. When you look at the list of organizations he supports with this ideas and his leadership, it looks like the combined resume of five people. He works with veterans organizations, antipoverty organizations, international cooperation organizations and the list goes on and on. He has been honored by dozens of organizations for excellence in public service.

For some reason, Nebraska has a habit of sending independent-minded

members to this body, and they play a key role in our deliberation. Perhaps because Nebraska is kind of plains State, kind of a Midwestern State, kind of a Western State, and in that way unique, Nebraskans have contributed a great deal of independence to our deliberations, which is so valuable in the Senate's search for consensus.

We in Minnesota are glad to be a part of CHUCK HAGEL's life. Since some of his education occurred at the Brown Institute in Minneapolis, we too claim a piece of him.

We thank the people of Nebraska for sharing him with the Nation as a Member of the Senate. We will certainly miss his razor sharp analytical mind and his wonderfully engaging personality. I am personally grateful to him for the way he introduced me to the habits and ways of the Senate and for helping me understand how to do my best for the people of my State.

In the history of this Nation, different kinds of men and women have given some of their talents and vision to this place for the benefit of the whole Nation. We thank Senator HAGEL for his willingness to serve and for the way he made the most of every moment of his time here in the Senate.

WAYNE ALLARD

Mr. President, with the conclusion of our business for the year comes the moment when we must say farewell to Members who have chosen to leave the Senate, and I want to take this opportunity to honor my friend and colleague from Colorado, Senator WAYNE ALLARD. He is leaving as a matter of principle, believing in the value of "citizen legislators," which he is fulfilling by ending his service here after two terms. I greatly respect him for that choice.

One of the wonderful things about the Senate is the distinctive experiences that bring people to this place. Senator ALLARD's professional training is as a veterinarian, a skill that is of great importance to a State with as much livestock agriculture as Colorado. He began a successful veterinary practice from nothing in Loveland, in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains. That experience has given him unique insight into the needs and concerns of America's millions of small businesses, where the job growth and creative energy of our economy comes from.

WAYNE ALLARD brought many values with him to the Senate, but perhaps the most important is the need to use more care in the way we spend the people's money. He personally practiced that value by returning \$42.2 million of his office allotment to the U.S. Treasury. As a member of the committees which handle appropriations, the Federal budget and banking policy, he has been a constant advocate for lower spending, improved efficiency in government programs, and steady progress toward a balanced budget.

Our former colleague, Howard Baker, once said that you could trace the de-

cline of the legislative branch of Government to the installation of air-conditioning in the Capitol. What he meant by that was that previous generations of Senators were driven from Washington by the tropical summers, and that gave them an opportunity to reconnect with their roots so they could return refreshed and reoriented toward the people's wishes. Senator ALLARD needed no such climatic encouragement: he couldn't wait to get back to Colorado where he would spend countless hours listening to and learning from the folks who sent him here.

I will truly miss his example and his friendship here in the Senate. The Senate is a distinctive and valuable institution generation after generation because the senior Members pass on their lessons to the junior Members. Senator ALLARD taught me a lot about how to be a good Senator by working hard, sticking to your principles, and listening more than talking.

Former Senator Harry S. Truman said that if you want a friend in Washington, buy a dog. But Senator ALLARD has been my good friend, encouraging me when I was discouraged and keeping me humble when I was flying too high for my own good.

I think the ideas of fiscal conservatism and frugality that he based his life and service on are returning to the forefront here in Washington as he departs. As we move toward a balanced budget, I think he can take pride in fighting for it for 12 years in Washington and pointing us in the right direction.

WAYNE ALLARD is a good man who chose to serve in the Senate for a specific amount of time and he has done that. I honor him today as a person of character and wisdom, and I thank him for making me a better Senator and for making the Senate a place that better reflects the values of regular people.

LARRY CRAIG

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, the State of Idaho occupies a very special place in my life's career. In the summer of 1943, during the height of World War II, I had the great fortune to find a job with the U.S. Forest Service. I was sent to Idaho, along with many other young men, to work in the forests. We performed a wide range of duties, from clearing trails to fighting forest fires.

After brief service in the Navy in the final year of World War II, I attended college and at my first opportunity, in the summer of 1947, I returned to Idaho to once again work with the Forest Service, helping preserve one of nature's greatest gifts—the mighty trees of the West.

Those two summers of hard work trained and prepared me to always respect those who labor with their hands.

Throughout my career in the Senate, I have enjoyed working with senators from Idaho, and sharing common interests, such as forestry and preserving the great outdoors, with those who represent that State. Senator LARRY CRAIG is one of those.

Through the years, I have found his perspective on controversial issues, such as forests, mining and agriculture especially the potato and sugar-beet issues to be very valuable and informative.

LARRY CRAIG and I also share an interest in the fine arts. My hobby is painting in oil; his is drawing with meticulous design. His creations are extraordinary in their detail. I hope, as he leaves the Senate, he will have opportunities to further utilize these exceptional talents to create pieces of art to be enjoyed by others.

I wish him and his family well.

VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER CARE IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to urge swift Senate passage of S. 2162, the proposed Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008, as amended. This is an omnibus health care measure, which responds to the burgeoning mental health concerns of veterans and their families. The bill, as it comes before the Senate, is a compromise agreement developed with our counterparts on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. I thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER of the House committee for their cooperation in this endeavor. I also thank my good friend, the committee's ranking member, Senator BURR, for his great energy and cooperation as we have developed this bill.

This compromise agreement is also focused on addressing homelessness among veterans, increasing VA's efforts on pain management, promoting excellence in VA's efforts relating to epilepsy, and improving access to care in rural areas. It also includes a series of necessary programmatic authorization extensions as well as major medical facility construction authorizations.

The framework for this bill is my legislation, S. 2162 as originally introduced. This bill represents a bipartisan approach and was cosponsored early on by the ranking member, Senator BURR, along with Senators MIKULSKI, ENSIGN, ROCKEFELLER, SMITH, BINGAMAN, DOLE, CLINTON, COLLINS, SESSIONS, and STEVENS.

Mr. President, I want to share how we began this process. The legislation did not stem from a lobbyist or an interest group. It came about because of one letter—a letter to me from the parents of Justin Bailey—Mary Kaye and Tony Bailey.

Justin Bailey was a war veteran who survived Iraq only to die while receiving care from VA for PTSD and substance use disorder. A week after his death last year, Justin's parents were naturally heartbroken by the death of their only son, but even more than that, they were concerned that other veterans might share his fate if VA mental health care did not improve.

In their own words, they asked, "Everyone talks about the costs of sending

troops to Iraq—what about the cost of caring for their injuries, both physical and psychological, when they return?"

From this first letter, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held various hearings on the mental health needs of veterans. The media carried so many stories of veterans who were suffering, and various studies showed how prevalent mental health difficulties are in those who return from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We worked with experts in the mental health field and others who were advocating for veterans, including those at the Disabled American Veterans, to craft a bill that responded to the problem. This legislation responds to the concerns of the Baileys and many others who have come to the committee to tell their stories, and does so with the clear understanding that veterans care is a cost of war. If we neglect to pay these costs when the service members first return from deployment, we as a nation will suffer incalculable human costs that can never be repaid.

Provisions included in this compromise agreement are drawn from various bills which have all been reported favorably by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, including S. 1233 as ordered reported on August 29, 2007; S. 2004, S. 2142, S. 2160, S. 2162, as ordered reported on November 14, 2007; and S. 2969, as ordered reported on June 26, 2008.

I will briefly outline some of the key provisions in the compromise agreement.

This legislation would make comprehensive changes to VA mental health treatment and research. Most notably, it would ensure a minimum level of substance use disorder care for veterans who need such care. It would also require VA to improve treatment of veterans with PTSD co-occurring with substance use disorders. Additionally, in order to determine if VA's residential mental health facilities are appropriately staffed, this bill would mandate a review of such facilities. It would also create a vital research program on PTSD and substance use disorders, in cooperation with, and building on the work of, the National Center for PTSD.

It is not uncommon for veterans with physical and mental wounds to turn to drugs and alcohol to ease their pain. Many experts believe that stress is the primary cause of drug abuse and of relapse to drug abuse. Sixty to eighty percent of Vietnam veterans who have sought PTSD treatment have alcohol use disorders. VA has long dealt with substance abuse issues, but there is much more that can be done. This legislation would provide a number of solutions to enhance substance use disorder treatment, including an innovative approach to substance use treatment via Internet-based programs.

Furthermore, the inclusion of families in mental health and substance use disorder treatment is critical. To that

end, the compromise agreement would fully authorize VA to provide mental health services to families of veterans and would set up a program to proactively help veterans and their families to transition from deployment to civilian life.

Beneficiary travel reimbursements are essential to improving access to VA health care for veterans in rural areas. This legislation would increase the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per mile and permanently set the deductible to the 2007 amount of \$3 each way. Senator TESTER has been a leader on this issue, and I thank him for that.

Too often, veterans suffer from lack of care not only because they reside in rural areas but also because they are unaware of the services available to them. This legislation would enhance outreach and accessibility by creating a pilot program on the use of peers to help reach out to veterans. It would also encourage improved accessibility for mental health care in rural areas through coordination with community-based resources. Mental Health America and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America brought to the committee the concept of using peers to help veterans, and I think it is a good one.

It is crucial that all veterans have access to emergency care. This bill would make corrections to the procedure used by VA to reimburse community hospitals for emergency care provided to eligible veterans to ensure that both veterans and community hospitals are not unduly burdened by emergency care costs. This provision is based on legislation introduced by Senator BROWN in response to a situation in his own State of Ohio, where community hospitals were not being reimbursed timely from VA.

The compromise agreement also addresses homelessness among veterans, a far too prevalent problem. The bill would create targeted programs to provide assistance for low-income veteran families. It would also increase the total amount that VA is authorized to spend on its successful Grant and Per Diem Program, which assists community-based entities that serve homeless veterans. Finally, the bill would expand a program to help formerly incarcerated veterans reintegrate into life and ensure facilities are up to par for women veterans who are homeless.

Epilepsy is often associated with traumatic brain injury. This legislation would establish six VA epilepsy centers of excellence, focused on research, education, and clinical care activities in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy. These centers would restore VA to the position of leadership it once held in epilepsy research and treatment. Senators MURRAY and CRAIG worked together to bring this critical legislation to the forefront. I also add that the Epilepsy Foundation of America and the American Academy of Neurology were very helpful to the committee on this issue.