

So I urge my colleagues to support these bills and help our kids get on a path to learn and succeed.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Oregon, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Oregon, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:30 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 2:34 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as the Senator from the State of Oregon, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH SELLERS

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Elizabeth Sellers on her retirement from the Department of Energy after 26 years. Beth most recently spent 6 years as DOE's Idaho Site Manager at the Idaho National Lab, INL. During her time there, the INL was created as the lead nuclear research and development laboratory for DOE, and a separate project, the Idaho Cleanup Project, was created to manage and clean up the radioactive waste at the site. Since 2003, Beth has overseen the work of 300 Federal employees and approximately 6,500 contractors. Beth's leadership and vision has helped further the critical energy and national security missions of INL and the Advanced Mixed Treatment Project with a commitment to excellence and safety. She has been at the helm as significant state milestones have been met through the Idaho Cleanup Project, and she will be missed at the lab.

Beth was not satisfied simply leading efforts at the lab. She knows the importance of community and maintaining strong community ties, both as the DOE Site Manager and on a personal level. She immersed herself in the Idaho Falls community life, volunteering in a number of different organizations, giving back to her host community. She not only leaves big shoes to fill in her professional life, she leaves a hole in the community as well.

I wish Beth well in her future endeavors overseas and have appreciated working with her during her time at INL.●

TRIBUTE TO NORRIS O'NEIL CHANDLER

• Mrs. McCASKILL. Mr. President, today I recognize Mr. Norris O'Neil Chandler and his lifetime of service to his country and his community. Mr. Chandler was born in Chaffee, MO, on August 11, 1923, and enlisted in the Regular Army at Jefferson Barracks. Following basic training he was assigned to a special amphibious engineering unit activated for World War II—the 149th Engineer Combat Battalion.

Mr. Chandler bravely participated in the monumentally important invasion of France on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, as a demolition specialist for the 149th. He would fight alongside his brethren, all of whom have rightfully become known as the Greatest Generation, from those Normandy beaches all the way to Germany, enduring hardship, tragedy, and triumph along the way. His efforts were one small part of changing the world as the forces of evil that sought to exterminate an entire religion and to deny freedom to so many were defeated. Mr. Chandler returned home, and like so many of his fellow veterans never stopped doing his small part to serve his country nor ever asked for anything in return for his humble service. This type of character cannot be taught, but it certainly can be appreciated. It is the finest exemplar of American values, and I honor Mr. Chandler and his American values today.

More specifically, following his service in WWII, Mr. Chandler became part of the newly activated Organized Reserve Corps, which developed into what is known today as the U.S. Army Reserve. Mr. Chandler continued his service in the Reserve Corps from December 1945 until October 1951, at which point he entered civilian service with the Missouri Military District, 11th Army Corps, St. Louis, MO, where he held various positions. Over 40 years later, Mr. Chandler remains employed by this organization, now known as the Directorate of Logistics-Washington's Media Distribution Division. This sort of longevity, commitment and humble service is hard to even comprehend in today's world, but it is easy to understand when you think of the values of the Greatest Generation that Mr. Chandler exudes.

It is because of people like Mr. Norris O'Neil Chandler that I am so proud to be a Senator representing the State of Missouri. I have even been told that he has more than 3,300 hours of unused sick leave, and has donated much of his annual leave to other employees through the leave donation program. It is because of the generosity and dedication of people like Mr. Chandler that the United States of America is the great Nation that it is.

For 60 years, Mr. Chandler has given so much to his country, his community, and his family, yet demanded so little back. I wish today to give my simple, humble thanks to this American hero. I have the utmost respect and gratitude for those who live their lives like Mr. Chandler. As we honor him today, he is a reminder to all of us of the true value of selfless service, and the impact of that service in our communities, our States, and our country.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The following message from the President of the United States was transmitted to the Senate by one of his secretaries:

ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT DATED JANUARY 2009 WITH THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS FOR 2009—PM-7

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Joint Economic Committee:

To the Congress of the United States:

The American economy has consistently proven its strength and resilience in the face of shocks such as natural disasters, high energy prices, and the terrorist attacks of September 11. The economy experienced 6 years of uninterrupted expansion, which included a record stretch of 52 consecutive months of job creation. The past year saw this growth cease as several forces that developed over many years in the credit and housing markets converged. The combination of these factors, coupled with a sustained period of rising energy prices, was sufficient to threaten the entire financial system and generated a shock so large that its effects have been felt throughout the global economy.

Under ordinary circumstances, it would be preferable to allow the free market to take its course and correct over time. But the Government has a responsibility to safeguard the broader health and stability of our economy. Under the extraordinary circumstances created by the financial crisis, the potential damage to American households and businesses was so severe that a systemic, aggressive, and unprecedented Government response was the only responsible policy option.

The actions taken by my Administration in response to the financial crisis have laid the groundwork for a return to economic growth and job creation, and they are beginning to show some early results. A measure of stability has returned to the financial system. There will, of course, continue to be challenges. Temporary Government programs must remain temporary and be unwound in an orderly manner as soon as conditions warrant. Financial regulations must be modernized to reflect the realities of the 21st century, and these efforts should ensure that the objective of protecting consumers and investors does not come at the expense of the flexibility required for innovations to come to the market. We must also continue to trust Americans with the responsibility of homeownership and empower them to weather turbulent times in the market by helping creditworthy homeowners avoid foreclosure.

As the country navigates through this trying period, we must never lose sight of the enormous benefits delivered by the free enterprise system. Americans have good reasons to be confident about the long-term health of our economy. Despite the current difficulties, there are a number of positive economic factors. Inflationary pressures have moderated as record high prices for oil and gasoline have retreated. Productivity growth, which helps to increase our standard of living and improve our international competitiveness, remains solid. The American economy continues to be the largest and most dynamic in the world, and its solid foundation of flexible labor markets, low tax rates, and open trade and investment policies all contribute to its ability to recover fairly quickly from shocks. Over the past 8 years, my Administration has worked to strengthen this foundation by adopting pro-growth, market-oriented policies, and our policies will position the economy for a strong rebound and continued long-run growth.

Sound economic policy begins with keeping taxes low. The tax relief enacted by my Administration was the largest in a generation. Tax rates have been lowered for every American who pays income taxes. More than 13 million Americans had their Federal income tax liability completely eliminated, and individuals and businesses have kept \$1.7 trillion of their own hard-earned money. Raising taxes at any time reduces our international competitiveness and further distorts the decisions of individuals and businesses; doing so in the current environment would have serious consequences for the economy. This tax relief has been a key factor in promoting the economic growth and job creation of recent years, and it should be made permanent. Unless the Congress acts, most of the tax relief that we have delivered over the past 8 years will be taken away, and 116 million American taxpayers will see their taxes rise.

The Government also has a responsibility to spend the taxpayers' money wisely. Over the course of my Administration, the rate of growth in nonsecurity discretionary spending has steadily decreased from more than 16 percent in 2001 to below the rate of inflation today. While the financial crisis has required significant taxpayer investments that will increase the budget deficit, we expect that most or all of those investments will be paid back to taxpayers over time. The greatest challenge to the fiscal health of the country remains the unsustainable growth in entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. I have laid out responsible, innovative solutions to address these challenges, which will otherwise only grow more difficult to solve over time. The Congress has an obligation to confront these issues.

Government does have a role to play in health care, but a robust private market is critical to ensuring that health care is affordable and accessible for all Americans. My Administration has sought to balance public and private roles in health care with market-oriented policies that increase the efficiency of health care delivery, encourage competition, and leave decisions in the hands of individuals and their doctors. For example, enactment of the Medicare prescription drug benefit program has provided more than 40 million Americans with better access to prescription drug coverage, expanded competition in Medicare, trusted consumers to make their own health care decisions, and the costs have been much lower than originally estimated. The introduction of Health Savings Accounts has also provided consumers with greater access to affordable health care plans. There is much more that can be done to improve health care, such as adopting medical liability reform, eliminating the bias in the tax code against those who do not receive health insurance through their employers, and increasing the power of small employers, civic groups, and community organizations to negotiate lower-priced health premiums. These policies would help reduce frivolous lawsuits that increase patients' costs, promote the use of health savings accounts, and encourage competition among health plans across State lines.

To be competitive in the global marketplace, the United States must remain open to international trade and investment and reject the false promise offered by protectionist policies. American workers and businesses can compete with anyone in the world, as evidenced by the remarkable performance of American exports in recent years. When I took office, the United States had free trade agreements (FTAs) in force with only three countries. Today, we have FTAs in force with 16 countries. I thank the Congress for its approval of these agreements and strongly encourage prompt approval of the agreements with Colom-

bia, Panama, and South Korea that will benefit our country. These agreements will provide greater access for our exports, support good jobs for American workers, and promote America's strategic interests. We also have an unprecedented opportunity to reduce barriers to global trade and investment through a successful conclusion to the World Trade Organization Doha Round negotiations. In addition, the Congress should reauthorize and reform trade adjustment assistance so that we can help those workers whose jobs are displaced to learn new skills and find new jobs.

The rapid increase in energy prices in the past year exposed just how dependent our economy is on oil. We must continue taking steps to increase our energy security. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 were major steps toward this goal, but in the short term, our country will continue to rely on fossil fuels for most of its energy supply. I am pleased that the Congress recognized this reality and agreed to remove restrictions that will allow responsible oil and gas exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf and expanded access to oil shale to help meet America's energy needs. In the long run, our energy security will require advances in clean and renewable energy technologies. My Administration has worked to reduce gasoline consumption and promote alternative fuels to transform the way Americans power their cars and trucks. We have also worked to develop cleaner energy sources to power Americans' homes and places of work, such as clean coal, nuclear, solar, and wind power. At home, we are on the path to slow, stop, and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, but substantial reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions are only possible with the concerted action of all countries. The Major Economies Process launched by my Administration in 2007 has brought all major economies together to discuss a common approach to a global climate agreement that includes the meaningful participation of all major economies.

The creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness of the American people is our country's greatest strength, and a vibrant education system is key to maintaining our Nation's competitive edge and extending economic opportunity to every citizen. Workers who invest in their education and training enjoy higher incomes and greater job security. The No Child Left Behind Act has succeeded in bringing greater accountability to schools, and the results are clear; as one example, African American and Hispanic students are posting all-time high scores in a number of categories. The Congress should reauthorize this vital law, and our Nation must continue to demand results and accountability from our educational system. To be competitive in the global economy, American workers

also need to continually update their skills. To that end, my Administration has invested nearly \$1 billion in new job training initiatives to ensure our workforce has the skills required of 21st century jobs. We have also nearly doubled support for Pell Grants to help millions of low-income Americans afford college tuition. The technological innovation that drives our global economic leadership depends on continued scientific discoveries and advancements, and I am pleased that the Congress authorized the doubling of basic research in key physical science and engineering agencies as I proposed in my American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). I urge the Congress to appropriate these ACI funds promptly to help sustain our economy's long-term competitive position.

Many of these issues are discussed in the 2009 *Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers*. The Council has prepared this Report to help policymakers understand the economic conditions and issues that underlie my Administration's policy decisions. Free market policies have lifted millions of people out of poverty and given them the opportunity to build a more hopeful life. By continuing to trust the decisions of individuals and markets and pursuing pro-growth policies, Americans can be confident that the economy will emerge stronger than ever from its current challenges, with greater opportunity for prosperity and economic growth.

GEORGE W. BUSH. *The White House.*

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2. An act to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BAUCUS, from the Committee on Finance, without amendment:

S. 275. An original bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BAUCUS:

S. 274. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an incentive to hire unemployed veterans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BAUCUS:

S. 275. An original bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Pro-

gram, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 276. A bill to establish a National Commission on Entitlement Solvency; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. REID, Mr. GREGG, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BAYH, and Ms. LANDRIEU)):

S. 277. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to expand and improve opportunities for service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GREGG, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 278. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a tax credit for qualified donations of employee services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KERRY, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 279. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the limitations on the deduction of interest by financial institutions which hold tax-exempt bonds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 280. A bill to develop a program to acquire interests in land from eligible individuals within the Crow Reservation in the State of Montana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. KOHL:

S. 281. A bill to promote labor force participation of older Americans, with the goals of increasing retirement security, reducing the projected shortage of experienced workers, maintaining future economic growth, and improving the Nation's fiscal outlook; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER:

S.J. Res. 6. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to United States citizenship; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. Res. 15. A resolution acknowledging the lifelong service of Griffin Boyette Bell, a legal icon, to the State of Georgia and to the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 16. A resolution designating the week of February 2 through February 6, 2009, as "National School Counseling Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. FEINGOLD):

S. Res. 17. A resolution recognizing and honoring Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger III, his co-pilot Jeffrey Skiles, the crewmembers of U.S. Airways Flight

1549, and the first responders, ferry operators and tug boat drivers of New York City, for their heroic and intuitive roles in the safe emergency landing of U.S. Airways Flight 1549; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 84

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 84, a bill to close the loophole that allowed the 9/11 hijackers to obtain credit cards from United States banks that financed their terrorist activities, to ensure that illegal immigrants cannot obtain credit cards to evade United States immigration laws, and for other purposes.

S. 95

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 95, a bill to prohibit appropriated funds from being used in contravention of section 642(a) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 276. A bill to establish a National Commission on Entitlement Solvency; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of myself and Senator CORNYN to introduce legislation that will address one of the most serious problems facing our Nation—the long-term health of Social Security and Medicare.

Today we propose a bipartisan, independent and permanent commission to return these essential programs to solid financial footing for generations to come.

Our legislation mandates the periodic, comprehensive review of Social Security and Medicare to ensure their present and future solvency.

By a year from the date of enactment, it requires the Commission to devise and recommend to Congress and the President a benefit and revenue structure that allows Social Security and Medicare to become, once again, stable and effective over the long-term. The problem we face is astronomical. President-elect Barack Obama is well aware of this, and said so on the front page of today's Washington Post.

He recognizes the growing threat this problem represents to the long-term health of our economy, and to the American people. So I look forward to working with him to find ways to ensure the long-term health of these great American institutions.

He recognizes, as Senator CORNYN and I do, that inaction is dangerous.

The Congressional Budget Office announced last week that the fiscal year 2009 deficit is projected to reach \$1.2 trillion, a new record.

The three largest entitlement programs, Social Security, Medicare, and