

eligible to anybody who bought and occupied a house as their principal residence, whether it was their first purchase or their tenth purchase, we would move more real estate and move more impetus to the housing market than it has seen in the past 24 months. As we do that, consumer confidence comes back, equities and values come back, the borrowing power of the American public comes back, and our economy comes back. Failure to do so and we remain in a quagmire where we are today, which is no legitimate sales, declining values, a loss of equity, and a continuing high unemployment rate and a continued depressed market-place.

So as we come back from our August break, as we begin to look forward, as we look at the end of the year, as we look at those things that are terminating, those things that need to be considered, let's pause for a second and realize the good that the tax credit has done so far, as limited as it was, and let's make it better. Let's extend it to July 1. Let's make it \$10,000. Let's take the means test off. Let's give an impetus to the move-up market. If we do, values will return, unemployment will go down, our economy will turn, and consumer price confidence will go up. I would submit it is a part of the main solution we need to take an economy that is on the bottom and move it back toward equilibrium and prosperity for America.

DISCLOSURE OF CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING ITEMS

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I submit pursuant to Senate rules a report, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

DISCLOSURE OF CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING ITEMS

I certify that the information required by rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate related to congressionally directed spending items has been identified in the committee report which accompanies H.R. 3288 and that the required information has been available on a publicly accessible congressional website at least 48 hours before a vote on the pending bill.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

RESTORE OUR WILD MUSTANGS ACT

• Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on August 5, I was pleased to introduce a Senate companion to H.R. 1018, the Restore Our American Mustang Act that was introduced by my good friend, Representative NICK RAHALL, in February 2009. On July 20, the ROAM Act passed the House of Representatives and was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. I hope

that Senator BINGAMAN and Senator MURKOWSKI, the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and Senator WYDEN and Senator BARRASSO, the chairman and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, will consider the merits of this bill and move it to the Senate floor.

S. 1579 and H.R. 1018 address a dilemma faced by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, which since 1971 have been charged with overseeing the Nation's herds of wild, free-roaming horses and burros.

In 1971, wild horses and burros roamed across 53.5 million acres of largely Federal lands in the western United States. Since that time, the range available to these wild herds has decreased, dwindling to some 34 million acres, much of it very arid, with sparse vegetation. Yet the wild herds have not only managed to hold their own in these rugged conditions, they have grown. When the populations exceed the carrying capacity of the land, the BLM conducts "gathers" or round-ups, and removes horses and burros from wild. These wild equines are then offered for adoption to the general public.

That sounds like a storybook solution to the management of the wild herds: save wild horses from starving on the range and place them in caring homes with horse-loving American citizens. The problem is, in 2009, BLM estimates that more than 10,000 wild horses and burros need to be removed from Federal rangelands. That is in addition to the 31,000 wild horses and burros that have already been pulled from the range and that are being held in short- and long-term holding facilities by the BLM. There are as many wild horses and burros being held off the range as live on the range, according to BLM statistics cited by the Government Accountability Office.

Even in the best economic times, there are not 10,000 people, let alone 30,000 people, willing to take on the challenge, rewarding as it might be, of bringing a wild horse home to live with them. And these are not the best economic times. Horse rescues and sanctuaries are overwhelmed by horses donated by owners unable to care for them. The news services report regularly on horses that are rescued from starving conditions or which have been abandoned by their owners.

Adopting a wild horse or burro is not to be undertaken lightly. BLM requirements for housing a newly adopted wild horse call for sturdy wood or pole fencing at least 6 feet high. BLM staff or contractors will load the adopted horse into an open stock-type trailer only, because these are not horses that can be led gently up a ramp into a divided stall type trailer like a domestic show horse. Once they arrive home, adopters must face the challenge of unloading a scared and wild animal from the trailer and into its new enclosure.

It may be months before the proud new owner can even put a hand on his

new horse to begin its training for a life of pleasure riding. Mustang adopters who lack the experience to train a wild horse themselves or who lack the resources to pay for expert help may be overwhelmed, often to the detriment of the horse. For these reasons, older mustangs, those adult horses that have spent 5 or more years living in the wild, are among the least adoptable of BLM's charges. These adult horses make up the bulk of the 22,000 mustangs in long-term pasture holding facilities.

So what are we to do about these beautiful icons of the American West?

The law provides the BLM with the authority to kill those excess horses and burros that are not adopted after three attempts or which are older than 10 years old. The BLM also has the authority to sell those animals "without limitation," meaning without restrictions on those horses being sent to slaughter plants in Mexico or Canada. The BLM has hesitated to use these authorities because of the public's revulsion to the idea of their government killing otherwise healthy and beautiful wild horses. The Government Accountability Office has pointed out that this puts BLM out of compliance with the law and raises the program's costs.

I share in the revulsion of the prospect of killing wild horses, as, I suspect, many in the BLM do as well. But the consequence of that revulsion is the climbing costs to house and feed what is now a population of 22,000 wild horses in long-term holding facilities. The long-term holding facilities are already over capacity and the costs are consuming most of BLM's funding for the wild horse and burro management program, and they are only going to rise. The solution to preventing wild horses and burros from overcrowding the open range is not to overcrowd them in fenced-in pastures.

S. 1579 and H.R. 1018 would revise the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act to provide BLM and the Forest Service with additional tools to manage the wild horse and burro populations in ways that preserve a thriving ecological balance. They also prohibit the killing or sale for slaughter of wild horses and burros.

The bills give the BLM the authority to restore wild horse and burro ranges by purchasing or acquiring equivalent land, with a goal of returning rangelands to something approaching the 53 million acres available to the wild herds in 1971. Current law does not allow BLM to acquire land for horses and burros that might not be in the same location occupied by wild horses prior to 1971.

Increasing the size of the range available to the herds means that fewer animals will need to be removed in order to maintain the land in good health. Free-roaming wild horses and burros do not have to be fed and maintained in long-term holding facilities. This also would reduce the number of wild horses and burros available for adoption, bringing

the supply of wild horses in line with the more limited number of homes available to them.

S. 1579 and H.R. 1018 also provide BLM managers with enhanced management tools and greater emphasis on emerging medical controls like long-term contraception to help keep herd sizes proportionate to the available grazing. It also puts greater emphasis on the adoption program by encouraging greater involvement from private, not-for-profit organizations that specialize in equine adoption and therapy programs.

Most Americans value our Nation's great Western heritage. Our idea of the wild, wild West is synonymous with wild horses thundering through great open spaces. Our images of dusty, scruffy prospectors are not complete without the requisite patient burro at his side. A hundred years ago, 2 million wild horses lived on the range—now, there are fewer than 35,000. We want to preserve our wild herds and to keep them forever wild. We can achieve that goal, but we need to provide BLM and the Forest Service with a more robust toolkit for long-term sustainable herd management.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1579 and move to ensure the long-term future of America's wild horses and burros.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK STRATTON

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful Alabamian and American, LTC Mark Stratton, 39, of Foley, AL, who was killed in Afghanistan on Memorial Day this year and laid to rest among the heroes at Arlington National Cemetery in June. Lieutenant Colonel Stratton was serving as commander of a Provincial Reconstruction Team, PRT, and was killed when an improvised explosive device, IED, detonated as his convoy was passing.

Having had the privilege of attending Lieutenant Colonel Stratton's funeral and hearing the stories told by his family members and those who had worked with him, it is clear that Lieutenant Colonel Stratton was a man of honor who took great pride in his service to our Nation.

In my conversations with his mother, Mrs. Jan York, she described her son as "good, determined, focused and he loved God, he loved America and loved the Air Force. He accomplished so much." She also described how proud he was, as a leader of his PRT, to have completed an important road project. He was proud because he knew it was a project of permanence that would benefit the lives of the people of the area. This is so typical of the patriotic selfless attitude of our magnificent military personnel.

His colleague and friend, Lieutenant Colonel Risner said of him, "He put the airmen that he was supervising or leading first, every step of the way." This

is the sign of a true leader who was dedicated both to the mission and to the development of his subordinates.

In admiration of his committed service and ultimate sacrifice, his colleagues on the Joint Staff in the Pentagon will pay tribute to him later this month by naming a conference room in his honor. I believe that it is a fitting homage to an individual who represented the best of what an airman and officer should be. It is good that our military leaders in the Pentagon will remember the sacrifice this great American made for his country and strive to honor his commitment in the way our military operations are carried out.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jennifer; their three young children Delaney, Jake, and A.J.; his mother Jan York and her husband Buddy; his brothers, Michael Stratton and Frankie Little; as well as his many friends and fellow warriors as they continue to grieve the loss of this great man. This is an incalculable loss for them, but I know that they will be able to take wonderful lessons from the way he lead his life both publicly and privately. They will also be able to take comfort from the great heritage he leaves to his family and to his Nation.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MEL MARTINEZ

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to speak about my friend and colleague, Mel Martinez, who is leaving the Senate this week.

Senator Martinez has a story unlike that of any of us who serve in this body. He came to this country from Cuba without his parents at age 15 as part of a humanitarian effort. And as the first Cuban-American Senator, he has always maintained a thoughtful and unique perspective on Cuba policy, one that I have always enjoyed hearing and considering.

As chairman of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, I was pleased to have Senator Martinez as part of that panel. It is not often you get a Secretary of Housing and Urban Development sharing his expertise in a Senate committee.

He worked tirelessly to address the crisis of homelessness, and I have been proud to work alongside him on some of the housing measures we have passed over the past couple of years. He has been enormously helpful and cooperative as a member of my committee, and we will miss his perspective.

Senator Martinez and I didn't agree on every issue, or even most issues. What we shared was a deep love for this amazing country, a deep respect for this institution, and a strong working relationship. Wherever Senator Martinez's remarkable life takes him next, I know that the citizens of his beloved Florida are grateful for his service and will join me in wishing him and his family nothing but the best.

EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if information is power, then an informed public is certainly an ingredient that helps make government work better and more responsively for the people.

I have always had a keen interest in technology and the Internet, so it has been encouraging to see the commitment and skill that the Obama administration has invested in applying information technology to the functions of government. One of the clearest examples of this has been in the innovative release of data about funds appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—the so-called economic stimulus package. It is all the more encouraging to see the way these efforts have spawned complementary initiatives by private foundations and entrepreneurs.

As a Vermonter I am especially proud that a project called ThisWeKnow.org became a top-three finalist in the Apps for America 2: The Data.gov Challenge, sponsored by The Sunlight Foundation, which asked contestants to produce Web applications to showcase the benefits of sharing Federal Government data with the public. ThisWeKnow.org, along with the other two finalists, showcased their Web sites this week in the Nation's Capital, at the Gov 2.0 Expo Showcase.

ThisWeKnow.org was selected as one of the three finalists out of 47 applications submitted. ThisWeKnow.org was built by GreenRiver.org and Intellidimension of Brattleboro, VT, to empower citizens to enter in their locations and to explore data related to their communities from across Federal agencies. Their site offers citizens one-stop shopping for information available to them about their own towns, States and communities.

The public's right to know is a cornerstone of our democracy. By using technology, a site such as this can provide citizens with access to data that is relevant to them and that can enable and encourage them to make informed decisions. This site is designed to make what was once a difficult and time-consuming process into a faster and more streamlined experience.

ThisWeKnow.org was designed and developed by Michael Knapp, managing director of GreenRiver.org, and Derrish Repchick, vice president of Product Development at Intellidimension, who are in Washington to attend the Gov 2.0 events this week. Although they did not win the grand prize, we congratulate them for all of their hard work and their public spirit, and encourage them to continue their efforts to promote a more accessible and open government.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of a September 8 article from The Brattleboro Reformer be printed in the RECORD.

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