

system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, relies heavily on the use of domestic steel in new construction.

The industry continues to incorporate improvements in the technology used to build steel projects. These improvements are also bringing down construction costs and increasing safety at construction sites. In light of these economic, environmental, and safety factors, it is no surprise that there is a three-to-one preference for using structural steel in the construction of multistory residential and non-residential buildings.

Mr. President, I congratulate the structural steel industry on its second annual SteelDay. Steel manufacturing and construction is driving our Nation's progress into the future.

GREATER OWENSBORO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the remarkable accomplishments of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce. They were selected as the winner, out of eight National finalists, in the 2010 Chamber of the Year competition sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, ACCE. This is quite a feat, as the ACCE's Chamber of the Year is the Nation's only award that recognizes local chambers for their dual role in creating and leading businesses and communities.

Chambers wanting to apply for this award could do so if they had an exceptional year or if they had a program or initiative that went above and beyond expectations. With this in mind, the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce highlighted their success in developing the Chamber Leadership Initiatives for Northwestern Kentucky, C-LINK, alliance and the Owensboro Buys It! program in the application process.

C-LINK includes 12 chambers in the region and has been a leading proponent of Interstate 69 in western Kentucky, one of the largest transportation projects in the region, which has seen significant progress in the past two years. Owensboro Buys It! was started in 2009 to create local commerce and to teach small business leaders how to initiate an "elevator pitch" and sharpen their ability to gain and retain customers. When the chamber board of directors mapped out a strategic plan in 2008, they made it their goal to earn this award by 2012. Because of their hard work, they managed to beat even that audacious goal.

Under the leadership of chamber president Jody Wassmer, the board of directors, staff, and members of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce made their hometown, their Commonwealth, and this Senator very proud. I ask my colleagues to rise and join me in congratulating them on this honor.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I commend the House of Representatives for promptly enacting the Freedom of Information Act amendments to the Securities and Exchange Act, Investment Company Act, and Investment Advisers Act of 2010, S. 3717. This bipartisan bill will ensure that the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, remains an effective tool to provide public access to information about the stability of our financial markets.

This bill will also ensure that the important goals of the historic Wall Street reform law—enhancing transparency, accountability, and confidence in our financial system—will become a reality for all Americans. The bill eliminates several broad FOIA exemptions for Security and Exchange Commission, SEC, records that were recently enacted as part of Public Law 111-203. The bill also helps to ensure that the SEC has access to the information that the Commission needs to carry out its new enforcement activities under the new reforms.

I thank Representative EDOLPHUS TOWNS, the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Representative BARNEY FRANK, the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Financial Services, for their support of this bill and for working with me to quickly enact this legislation. I also thank Senators GRASSLEY, CORNYN, and KAUFMAN for cosponsoring this important open government bill. In addition, I commend the many open government organizations, including OpenTheGovernment.org, the Project on Government Oversight, the American Library Association, and the Sunlight Foundation for their support of this bill.

The Freedom of Information Act has long recognized the need to balance the government's legitimate interest in protecting confidential business records, trade secrets, and other sensitive information from public disclosure, and preserving the public's right to know. To accomplish this, care must always be taken to ensure that exemptions to FOIA's disclosure requirements are narrowly and properly applied. The bill accomplishes this important goal.

I commend the Congress for working in a bipartisan and expeditious manner to eliminate these overly broad FOIA exemptions. I urge the President to promptly sign this good government bill into law.

FEDERAL HIRING FREEZE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate subcommittee that oversees the Federal workforce, I strongly oppose the proposal by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to impose a hiring freeze for all non-security positions in the Federal Gov-

ernment. If adopted, this proposal would sacrifice our Nation's long-term investments in the employees needed to efficiently and effectively run government programs for a short-sighted approach that does nothing to address our current fiscal challenges.

Far from being fiscally responsible, these policies would end up costing the government more over the long run, by increasing our reliance on contractors whose work would not be capped. Arbitrary restrictions on hiring Federal employees open up opportunities for waste, fraud, and abuse as contracting expands without investment in oversight. Over the past decade, Federal contracts have nearly doubled in size, to over \$500 billion, but the size of the workforce overseeing contractors has stayed constant. We must reverse, not reinforce, that trend.

Over the past two years, we have made efforts to rebalance the work performed by Federal employees and contractors. Many times, replacing contractors with Federal employees allows agencies to more efficiently meet their missions and provide vital services. The American people expect strong leadership from the Federal Government and we must make sure the Federal Government has the people it needs to perform critical functions and to properly oversee the important work done by contractors. Freezing the Federal workforce could once again lead to dramatic overreliance on contractors, putting agency missions and taxpayer dollars at risk.

The American people deserve a government that hires the right people with the right skills to run their government in an effective and efficient manner. An arbitrary cap on Federal employees is a poor substitute for the careful, thoughtful approach to Federal workforce planning we need.

Our Federal civil service is comprised of hard working, talented people who have dedicated their lives to the service of this country—and our way of life would not exist without them. These are honorable men and women who provide critical services to the American people, including protecting our Nation, ensuring that our food and drugs are safe, caring for our wounded warriors, and responding to natural disasters. America's public servants deserve our gratitude and respect. I thank them for their dedication.

AQUACULTURE DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak on an issue that is of great importance to my home State of Louisiana: Federal disaster assistance. As you know, along the gulf coast, we keep an eye trained on the Gulf of Mexico during hurricane season. This is following the devastating one-two punch of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of 2005 as well as Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last year. Our communities and businesses are still

recovering from these disasters—some from a disaster that devastated the gulf coast almost 5 years ago. We are now also dealing with the economic and environmental damage from the Deepwater Horizon disaster which occurred this April. For this reason, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship ensuring effective Federal disaster coordination is one of my top priorities. While the gulf coast is prone to hurricanes, other parts of the country are no strangers to disaster. For example, the Midwest has tornadoes, California experiences earthquakes and wildfires, and the Northeast sees crippling snowstorms. So no part of our country is spared from disasters—disasters which can and will strike at any moment. With this in mind, we must ensure that the Federal Government is better prepared and has the tools necessary to respond quickly, effectively following a disaster.

In order to help ongoing recovery efforts in the gulf coast, and to give the U.S. Small Business Administration, SBA, more tools to respond after a future disaster, I am proud that the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5297, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. I have spoken at length on the Senate floor about the huge impact this legislation will have for small business owners. Today I also note that this legislation includes an important provision improving SBA disaster assistance. This provision builds off of SBA disaster reforms enacted in 2008 and ensures that small businesses in the aquaculture sector will not be left without disaster assistance following future disasters. In particular, the provision is section 1501 of H.R. 5297. I note that this provision is similar to section 205 of legislation I introduced last year, the Small Business Administration Disaster Recovery and Reform Act of 2009. This section amends the Small Business Act to make aquaculture businesses eligible for SBA economic injury disaster loans.

Currently, the SBA determines that aquaculture includes any industry where an individual farms aquatic organisms, farming means intervention in the rearing process to enhance production—regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators. These include farmers of: algae, alligators, frogs, turtles, seaweed, clams, crawfish, pearls, fish farms/hatcheries, mussels, and oysters. Under current provisions of the Small Business Act, SBA is prohibited from providing assistance to these industries as it was wrongly assumed that they would be covered by other Federal agencies. This is because, when Congress repealed SBA disaster assistance for agricultural businesses in the 1980s, they mistakenly assumed that all of these businesses, including aquaculture businesses, would be helped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA.

For example, oystermen who seed private grounds which they own or rent are engaged in aquaculture and are currently ineligible. Public ground oys-

termen, however, who do not have exclusive use of any area, do not farm and are eligible for SBA economic injury disaster loans. In Louisiana, our aquaculture businesses in the southern part of the State were hit hard by both Hurricane Katrina and Rita. These businesses, many crawfish farmers or those with fish farms, were ineligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, disaster assistance, but were also ineligible for SBA disaster loans. We also learned that similar problems followed Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008. A more recent example of the huge problem this causes is that the SBA is currently offering \$2 million economic injury disaster loans, EIDLs, to businesses impacted by the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Since the Small Business Act currently prohibits aquaculture businesses from receiving EIDLs, they were ineligible. However, no other Federal agency, including USDA was providing assistance for this disaster. So small businesses impacted by a disaster were told. We cannot help you, even though no other Federal agency was there to fill in the gap.

In closing, I believe that the commonsense fix sent to the President today will give these businesses they help they need to recover from future disasters. Businesses involved in the farming of the following stand to benefit greatly from this new legislation: algae, alligators, frogs, turtles, seaweed, clams, crawfish, pearls, fish farms/hatcheries, mussels, and oysters. I thank the chair and ask that my entire statement and a copy of this particular provision appear in the RECORD.

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

SEC. 1501. AQUACULTURE BUSINESS DISASTER ASSISTANCE.

Section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632), as amended by section 1343, is amended by adding at the end the following: “(z) AQUACULTURE BUSINESS DISASTER ASSISTANCE.—Subject to section 18(a) and notwithstanding section 18(b)(1), the Administrator may provide disaster assistance under section 7(b)(2) to aquaculture enterprises that are small businesses.”.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR RUFUS BRADLEY, JR.

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to pay tribute to a distinguished religious leader in Saginaw, MI, Pastor Rufus Bradley, Jr. Pastor Bradley will be honored at a banquet on September 25, 2010, by his church family. The banquet will celebrate his 30 years of ministry and his 23 years as Pastor of New Life Baptist Church Ministries.

Since accepting his call to the ministry, Pastor Bradley has persistently sought to encourage and enlighten his congregation, and through these efforts, has earned the respect and admiration of people throughout Michigan. His pastoral leadership and commitment to service is admirable, and The

New Life Baptist Church Ministries has flourished under his spiritual guidance. Through his stewardship and many community-based efforts such as the “Mission in the City Movement,” Pastor Bradley has provided much needed assistance to those most in need in the greater Saginaw community.

Before becoming pastor of New Life, Pastor Bradley studied theology under the tutelage of several well-known religious leaders. He also earned a bachelor's degree from the United Theological Seminary in Monroe, LA, and is a graduate of the Beeson Institute for Advanced Church Leadership. Pastor Bradley is a family man and is supported by his wife, Relinda Bradley. They have enjoyed 32 wonderful years together and are the proud parents of two children, June and Rufus, Jr.

I know my colleagues join me in congratulating Pastor Bradley on 30 years of pastoral leadership and faithful service to the greater Saginaw community. We wish him the best as he continues this important work for many more years.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:08 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 846. An act to award a congressional gold medal to Dr. Muhammad Yunus, in recognition of his contributions to the fight against global poverty.

S. 1055. An act to grant the congressional gold medal, collectively, to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, United States Army, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1745. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide liability protections for volunteer practitioners at health centers under section 330 of such Act.

H.R. 3199. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to State emergency medical service departments to provide for expedited training and licensing for veterans with prior medical training, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5307. An act to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to include ultralight vehicles under the definition of aircraft for purposes of the aviation smuggling provisions under that Act.

H.R. 5710. An act to amend and reauthorize the controlled substance monitoring program under section 3990 of the Public Health Service Act.

H.R. 5756. An act to amend subtitle D of title I of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 to provide grants and technical assistance to University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service to improve services rendered to children and adults on the autism spectrum, and their families, and for other purposes.