

against the abusive fees and practices of Wall Street.

JAPAN TRAGEDY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my deepest condolences to the people of Japan, and to reaffirm that the United States stands ready to assist the country and its people in this time of tremendous need.

On Friday, March 11, the world watched in horror as a devastating 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the northeastern coast of Japan, triggering a devastating tsunami that sent a 30-foot high wall of water hurtling into coastal towns and leaving complete destruction in its wake.

As a Senator from California, which has far too often experienced the devastation of earthquakes, I was horrified by the magnitude of this event.

In a stunning development, scientists are now saying that the quake caused the island of Japan to shift by 8 feet and the Earth's axis to move by 4 inches.

In Japanese cities such as Sendai and Minami Sanriku, entire communities and countless lives vanished in an instant. In Minami Sanriku alone, 10,000 members of a population of 17,000 remain unaccounted for.

The force of the tsunami generated by the quake was so great that waves traveled across the Pacific Ocean at more than 500 miles per hour, slamming into Hawaii and cities along the California and Oregon coasts.

Today, we know that an estimated 4,277 lives have been confirmed lost—a figure that will undoubtedly rise—and that hundreds of thousands have been displaced. In this time of extraordinary grief, our thoughts and prayers go out to those who have lost loved ones and to those whose family and friends remain missing.

What we also know is that without Japan's strict building codes and well-developed early warning systems, this terrible tragedy would have been much worse.

I praise the work of all the first responders who are working around the clock in Japan. Tens of thousands of Japanese rescue workers have been joined by teams from around the world, including from the United States and China.

I know that this includes a search and rescue team from Los Angeles County.

The team, which left for Japan on Saturday, is made up of 74 rescue personnel including firefighters and paramedics as well as six teams of search dogs who are trained to look for survivors trapped in debris left by the earthquake and tsunami.

There are also approximately 600 servicemembers from Naval Air Station Lemoore in California aboard the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, who are assisting relief efforts off the Japanese coast.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to all of those who are working tirelessly to

save lives and bring comfort to communities in need.

We also know that the earthquake and tsunami have caused tremendous difficulty at a number of nuclear energy facilities within Japan.

The damage and subsequent failure of systems at these nuclear reactors are a clear warning that we must step up efforts to ensure that every precaution is taken to safeguard all of our people from a similar nuclear disaster.

Special and immediate attention should be given to those nuclear reactors that share similar conditions as the failing reactors in Japan—those located near a coastline or fault line, or those with a similar design.

We must all reexamine our assumptions about what constitutes a credible threat to those reactors and ensure we learn the lessons shown to us by the recent events in Japan.

As chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which has jurisdiction over domestic nuclear regulatory activities, I will ensure that our members have full briefings on all of these issues, and I will hold a hearing on the safety of the Nation's nuclear facilities and what lessons can be learned from the dangerous situation at the failing reactors in Japan. I am also calling on the NRC to conduct a comprehensive investigation of these issues, with a focus on areas that are especially vulnerable to seismic activity like California.

I would also like to spend a few moments talking about the approximately 300,000 Japanese-Americans who call California home.

I am particularly proud that the Japanese American community in my State has quickly stepped up to assist with relief efforts in the aftermath of this horrible tragedy. This includes the Japan America Society of Southern California—a nonprofit organization founded in 1909 to build relationships between the United States and Japan. This also includes the nonprofit Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. These are just a couple of examples of how Californians are pulling together to help the thousands who have been devastated by the earthquake and tsunami.

I thank all those in California, and those across the country and the world, who have responded to this tragedy with an outpouring of support for the people of Japan.

I would also like to take just a brief moment to thank the Federal, State, and local officials in Hawaii, California and along the west coast for their quick response in warning residents of the tsunami threat and assisting those communities affected by severe waves.

Coastal areas in northern California, particularly Crescent City and Santa Cruz, were impacted by these waves, resulting in damages to port and harbor infrastructure. I am pleased that federal officials arrived in California Monday and are working with State and local officials to assess the situation.

And finally, I thank Senators REID, MCCONNELL, KERRY, and LUGAR for drafting a resolution on the tragedy which passed the Senate Monday evening. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

The resolution expresses the Senate's deepest condolences to all of those affected by this tragedy, including the families of the victims. It also urges the U.S. Government and the international community to provide any additional assistance the Japanese government may need as it moves toward healing, rebuilding, and recovery.

Experts tell us that events of this magnitude are rare—in fact, this was the largest recorded earthquake in Japan's history.

While we hope and pray that we never see such a horrific event again, this tragedy serves as a stark reminder of nature's extraordinary power and how precious and fragile life is.

Let us also use this as an opportunity to redouble our commitment here in America to do the hard work of preparing for the unthinkable.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL LOREN M. BUFFALO

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the life of one of America's bravest killed in action in Afghanistan—CPL Loren M. Buffalo—a fallen hero who served our Nation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Corporal Buffalo, 20, of Mountain Pine, AR, was by all accounts, driven by a call to serve his country and strong sense of civic duty.

The son of an Arkansas National Guardsman and the grandson of a World War II veteran, Corporal Buffalo joined the Army in 2009, just after graduating from Mountain Pine High School. His father, Cecil Buffalo, told *The Sentinel-Record*, that he knew his son wanted to serve his country all the way back in junior high. Mr. Buffalo said his son was a “strong-hearted all-American boy” who “loved his country and wanted to serve it.”

In Mountain Pine, Corporal Buffalo is remembered as a young man who would make the best out of any situation. One of his mentors said that Corporal Buffalo “was 100 percent about community.” During his teenage years, Corporal Buffalo undertook a number of projects honoring and supporting our Nation's veterans.

Beyond a life of service, Corporal Buffalo enjoyed making music. A multitalented musician, Mr. Buffalo said his son could play the guitar, drums, bass and “just about anything you put in his hand.”

Corporal Buffalo was assigned to B Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division based out of Fort Campbell, KY. According to initial reports, he died from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his dismounted patrol in Kandahar. He received multiple medals for service, including a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

Corporal Buffalo made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. I ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in honoring his life and legacy. I ask that we all keep his family, fellow soldiers and friends in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. He is a true American hero.

RECOGNIZING POLAND SPRINGS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in these challenging economic times, it is a pleasure to recognize a business that is growing and creating new jobs as it demonstrates environmental stewardship and community citizenship. The Poland Spring Water Company of Maine is such a business.

The pure, natural spring water found in Maine's Western Mountains has been prized by residents and travelers since the earliest days of our Nation. In 1845, Hiram Ricker began bottling this water and a company was born. By 1904, the water had gained international praise earning medals of excellence at the Columbian Exposition and the World's Fair. The Ricker Inn, which opened a decade later, hosted such illustrious guests as Presidents Cleveland and Taft.

Today, Poland Spring is one of the best-selling bottled spring water brands in North America. Its bottling plants in three Maine communities provide some 800 good-paying, skilled jobs. Its annual payroll of \$40 million and \$65 million in purchases of goods and services from other Maine companies make it a mainstay of our State's rural economy. Its generous support for schools, fire and rescue, conservation, and many other causes strengthen our communities.

Three years ago, Poland Spring opened its newest plant in the small town of Kingfield with 40 workers. This year, employment stands at 70 and the Kingfield operation was recently named "The Best Plant in North America" by Poland Springs' parent company, Nestle Waters. That is an outstanding record of growth and accomplishment in such a short time, but it doesn't surprise me to see a Maine facility achieve this distinction.

Poland Spring does not just bottle water—it is a diligent guardian of Maine's precious groundwater resources. The company's extensive monitoring efforts to protect water quality and the local watershed set a standard for the industry worldwide. From its ultra-light plastic bottle and energy-efficient building design to its operation of the largest biodiesel trucking fleet in Maine, Poland Spring's commitment to the environment is seen at every step of the process.

I congratulate the Poland Spring Water Company for more than 160 years of contributions to the State of Maine and the Kingfield facility for its recognition as the best in North America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO KATIE HURLEY

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, today I recognize a great Alaskan as she celebrates her 90th birthday at the end of this month. Katie Hurley was born and raised in Juneau, AK, and embodies so much of what makes Alaska great. She is a living history of the State of Alaska.

Katie was there at the very beginning of the push for Alaska Statehood, serving Governor Ernest Gruening in Alaska's territorial days. Katie served as chief clerk to the Alaska Constitutional Convention in Fairbanks during the very cold winter of 1955–1956. With a manual typewriter and mimeograph machine, she had minutes and amendments ready every morning for the delegates. It is Katie's voice you can hear in the audio recordings of the final roll call vote of the Constitutional Convention.

Katie's public service to Alaska transcends every level of government. Governor Bill Egan appointed Katie to the State Board of Education where she served for 7 years. She served to the term limit under Governor Egan but was reappointed by Governor Jay Hammond. She has been elected to the Alaska State Legislature and the Matanuska Telephone and Matanuska Electric association boards. She embodies completely what it means to be a public servant and community member.

It is appropriate Katie's birthday falls during Women's History Month. Katie is a role model for so many Alaskan women. She was the first woman in Alaska to win her party's nomination for statewide office. Katie was the first executive director of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women and was appointed by Governor Steve Cowper to the Human Rights Commission in 1987, serving twice as chair.

She is still active in the Alaska chapter of the National Organization of Women. In the past, she would grab her knitting—baby blankets for her grandchildren—to attend legislative hearings on women's reproductive health rights. She has been a tenacious advocate for title IX funding and education equity. Katie is a breast cancer survivor of 21 years and still participates in the annual Alaska Run for Women to raise money for breast cancer research. Last year—at age 89—she finished the 5-mile course with her team.

Anyone who knows Katie understands she is never one to slow down. Her enthusiasm is infectious, and she still spends time imparting Alaska's history to young Alaskans and reminding all Alaskans of the common goals we shared at statehood and the spirit in which our State constitution was drafted.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Katie and her decades of service to Alaska on her 90th birthday. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.J. Res. 48. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. HARKIN for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Jonathan Andrew Hatfield, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Corporation for National and Community Service.

*Kelvin K. Droegemeier, of Oklahoma, to be a Member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation for a term expiring May 10, 2016.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Heather A. Higginbottom, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

*Carolyn N. Lerner, of Maryland, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, for the term of five years.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 592. A bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to remove the cap on punitive damages established by the Supreme Court in *Exxon Shipping Company v. Baker*; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.