

The Postal Service has lost more than \$13 billion during the past 2 years and is losing \$25 million each day. It will reach its credit limit of \$15 billion by the end of the year. Despite the fact that Congress has deferred or reduced the Postal Service's payments for future retiree health benefits multiple times, the Postal Service has still reported billions of dollars in deficits—clear evidence that its fiscal woes go far beyond this requirement.

The Senate bill passed in April ensures those promises to future retirees will be kept, while still providing financial relief by restructuring the payment plan in a responsible way.

Much is at stake. Without legislative reforms, the universal mail service that drives a trillion-dollar mail industry and supports more than 8 million jobs will be in jeopardy.

A key reason for the Postal Service's crisis is simply a changing world, where more and more communication is online rather than via traditional mail. First-class mail volume has fallen by 26 percent over the past 6 years and continues to decline. Reflecting that sharp drop in volume, the Postal Service's revenue has also plummeted from \$72.8 billion in 2006 to \$65.7 billion in 2011.

Nearly 80 percent of the Postal Service's costs are workforce-related, and so, as painful as it may be, finding a compassionate way to reduce these costs is simply unavoidable. In doing so, however, it is critical that the service on which many postal customers depend—customers the Postal Service desperately needs to keep—be preserved. The worst thing the Postal Service could do would be to drive more customers out of the mail, causing revenues to decline further and ensuring that the financial free fall continues. That would trigger a death spiral from which the Postal Service might never recover.

We need to help put the Postal Service back on solid financial footing, not only to help protect those who work in jobs related to mailing industry but also so that taxpayers are not left holding the bag.

The bill I coauthored along with Senators LIEBERMAN, CARPER, and SCOTT BROWN would do just that.

Our bill encourages the Postal Service to operate more like a business by cutting internal costs first instead of driving away customers with deep service cuts or steep price hikes.

Our bill would transfer to the Postal Service the nearly \$11 billion it has overpaid into the Federal Employee Retirement System and direct the Postmaster General to use a portion of this money for retirement and separation incentives in order to reduce the size of the workforce in a compassionate way.

Let me emphasize: This refund is not taxpayer money. It was contributed by the Postal Service using ratepayer dollars. It is an overpayment that was identified and confirmed by the actu-

aries at OPM and verified by the GAO. GAO recently confirmed OPM's assessment that this figure now has risen to nearly \$11 billion.

The Senate-passed bill also includes a new requirement that arbitrators rendering binding decisions in labor disputes consider the financial condition of the Postal Service. I know that it might defy belief that an arbitrator would not automatically consider the looming bankruptcy of the Postal Service when ruling on contract disputes. Some previous arbitrators, however, have discounted this factor in their decisions because the requirement to consider it was not explicitly listed in law.

For the first time in 35 years, the bill also brings sorely needed, common-sense reforms to the Federal Workers' Compensation Program, not only at the Postal Service but across the entire Federal Government. More than 45,500 people are on the long-term rolls for Federal workers' comp, and 40 percent of those are Postal Service employees. The reforms will help injured employees return to work and ensure that workers' comp is not a substitute for retirement benefits.

The Senate bill would also rationalize what has been an erratic and Draconian closure plan for thousands of rural post offices. While some post offices can and should be closed, curbing access for customers could well jeopardize revenue. Therefore, our bill would set up a new process that would involve the consideration of alternatives to closure, such as reducing hours, co-locating a post office at a nearby pharmacy, or renting out excess space to other government agencies. Perhaps most important, the process includes the requirement for the views of the affected community to be heard and responded to prior to any final decision.

Our bill would prevent the Postal Service from eliminating Saturday delivery for the next 2 years. Instead, it directs the USPS to embark on a period of aggressive cost-cutting and then would allow this reduction in service only if the Government Accountability Office and postal regulators both certify that elimination of Saturday delivery is still necessary to achieve solvency.

The Senate's bipartisan postal reform bill preserves the Postal Service and the critical economic activity it supports.

Now, the House must act. Failure to do so puts in peril American commerce and could harm our fragile economy.

I am confident that, for the good of our country, we will be able to come together with our House colleagues and work out our differences, no matter how significant those differences may be. No doubt more compromises will be required along the way, but it is critical that we get a bill to the President for his signature as soon as possible.

Our task is urgent. Postal employees, businesses who rely on the U.S. mail,

and the American people should not have to wait any longer.

WORLD ALZHEIMER'S ACTION DAY

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I wish to join my colleagues in bringing attention to Alzheimer's disease and dementia, which tragically affects so many people across our Nation, including in my home State of Hawaii. Today, the Alzheimer's Association recognizes World Alzheimer's Action Day as a way of raising awareness and reducing the stigma associated with Alzheimer's. Sadly, this disease has touched the lives of the families of so many of my friends, colleagues, and staff.

In 2010, 27,000 people in Hawaii were living with Alzheimer's disease. Their family members and loved ones sacrificed to help them with nearly \$800 million worth of unpaid care. Not only is this a devastating disease for the people afflicted with it, but the emotional and monetary costs to their families are enormous.

The reach of the disease continues to grow, and it is estimated that the cost of caring for people with Alzheimer's and other dementia in America will reach \$1.1 trillion by 2050. Despite the fact that Alzheimer's has affected so many, the disease itself remains poorly understood. Not only does it cause memory loss and confusion, but it is also the sixth leading cause of death nationwide.

During the last Congress, my colleagues and I worked together to pass the National Alzheimer's Project Act, which President Obama signed into law in 2011. This law created a national strategic plan to address the crisis of Alzheimer's disease and to make ending Alzheimer's a national priority. We have a plan in place to fight this disease, but finding a cure will require us to continue funding research into the disease. While we work towards a cure, we must also support caregivers and raise public awareness of the effects of this disease.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to all those who are caring for family members who are afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Many caregivers have one or more jobs and other family members to care for and it can often be a thankless job. So mahalo nui loa, thank you very much, for your sacrifices. I call on my colleagues to continue supporting Alzheimer's disease research and education so that we may find a cure and end this devastating disease.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT EPPLIN

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the distinguished public service of Robert Epplin, who served for nearly 20 years as staff in the Senate, and most recently for the past 3½ years as my legislative director. Rob's service in the Senate, as well

as his service in the executive branch, has typified what a dedicated public servant should be: he took pride in his work and faced challenges with determination and tenacity; he recognized what an honor it was to serve the people of this country and my constituents, in particular; and he had a respect for and an unparalleled understanding of the Senate as an institution. Because of these many fine qualities, Rob earned the respect and admiration of so many of his staff colleagues, as well as so many Senators.

Rob got his start in Washington in 1989 working as a research analyst at the Republican National Committee. In 1991 he went to work at the Department of Education, serving in the office of then-Secretary LAMAR ALEXANDER.

Rob began his work in the Senate in 1993 when he served as an adviser for budget, economic, foreign affairs, and defense issues for former Senator Bob Packwood of Oregon. At the time he accepted the position, I am sure he had little inkling that his work would lead to more than a decade of service to the Oregon congressional delegation. In 1994, Rob moved to the Senate Finance Committee, where he continued to work for Senator Packwood as a professional staff member responsible for pensions, benefits, social security, and economic issues. He then worked for the Office of Management and Budget before returning in 1997 to the Senate and Oregon delegation as a senior adviser, and later legislative director, to my friend and former colleague, Senator Gordon Smith.

During his career in public service, Rob left his mark on issues ranging from tax and national security to budget policy. But it was his long fight for the passage of historic civil rights legislation, including the repeal of the don't ask, don't tell law and hate crimes legislation, that gives him the most pride. America now welcomes the service of any qualified individual who is willing to put on the uniform, and we no longer dismiss brave, dedicated, and skilled service men and women simply because they are gay. In addition, those who commit hate crimes against individuals based on their sexual orientation can now be punished under Federal law.

As Rob leaves the Senate after nearly 20 years of hard work and dedicated public service, he also leaves behind an impressive list of accomplishments, and colleagues whose lives he touched because he was such an exceptional role model and mentor. I wish him continued success and every happiness in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO MONTFORD POINT MARINE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, on the 25th day of June 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 establishing the fair employment practice that began to erase discrimination in the Armed Forces.

In 1942, President Roosevelt established a presidential directive giving African Americans an opportunity to be recruited into the Marine Corps. These African Americans, from all States, were not sent to the traditional boot camps of Parris Island, SC and San Diego, CA. Instead, African American Marines were segregated—experiencing basic training at Montford Point—a facility at Camp Lejeune, NC. Approximately 20,000 African American Marines received basic training at Montford Point between 1942 and 1949.

In July of 1948 President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order No. 9981 negating segregation. In September of 1949, Montford Marine Camp was deactivated, ending 7 years of segregation.

On April 19, 1974, Montford Point Camp was renamed Camp Johnson, in honor of the late Sergeant Major, Gilbert H. "Hashmark" Johnson. Johnson was one of the first African Americans to join the Corps, a Distinguished Montford Point Drill Instructor and a Veteran of WWII and Korea. The Camp remains the only Marine Corps installation named in honor of an African American.

The awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal came to fruition after the signing of H.R. 2447, Public Law 112-59 by President Obama on 23 Nov 11, which is the highest civilian honor for the distinguished achievement. The Congressional Gold Medal was presented to 366 Original Montford Point Marines, 27 June 2012 at the Capital Visitor's Center in Washington, DC. The next day, replicas of this medal were presented to these men at the Commandant of the Marine Corps' residence.

January of 2012 began the keeling of the USNS Montford Point, T-MLP-1, the lead ship of her class of Mobile Landing Platforms, MLP, a ship named in honor of the Original Montford Point Marines. Currently the Montford Point Marine Association Inc is raising funds to build the Montford Point Memorial at Camp Lejeune, NC.

Today, I would like to recognize the following Original Montford Point Marines from Louisiana:

Henry Leonard Bart, New Orleans
Winston Joseph Burns, Sr., New Orleans
Cleauthor Sanders, Shreveport
Otis O'Neal Stewart, Baton Rouge
Ruffin Dawson, Mandeville
Joseph Bastian, New Iberia
Alcee Chriss, Sr., Baton Rouge
Walter Duhon, Fenton
William Joseph Brashear, Morgan City

RECOGNIZING THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Junior League of Washington, JLW, as this organization honors 100 years of community service and dedication to the greater Washington, DC, area. The Junior League has approximately 300 organizations across the world, including eight leagues in my home State of Lou-

isiana. I know that the women in these organizations make a profound impact on their communities, and in particular, I recognize the positive impact the women of the Junior League of Washington have made in communities throughout our Nation's Capital since 1912.

The Junior League of Washington, JLW, is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. Throughout their history, the JLW has provided millions of volunteer hours and more than \$5.4 million to the community.

It was one woman, Miss Elizabeth Noyes, and her sewing circle, that started the JLW in 1912. The League quickly grew to over 100 women working for the welfare of children and serving the helpless and sick. One hundred years later, the league is still going strong with over 2,300 members still striving to improve the lives of children and the poor.

The league continues this mission and in the late 1990s chose to focus its energies on literacy-related programs. The ability to read, write, and communicate affects far more than a person's knowledge of literacy masterpieces. It changes their access to jobs, health care, and transportation, and the way they raise their children. The JLW has adopted a broad approach to solving the literacy challenges their community faces by addressing the issue from many angles: adult, child, and cultural. The league is proud to partner with over 23 organizations throughout the area to achieve this laudable goal.

In addition, the league honors and celebrates diversity while focusing on shared values, and it strives to create an environment in which any woman committed to improving her community, regardless of race, religion, or national origin, will feel welcome and be encouraged to be part of the organization. The JLW is a vibrant presence in the lives of the women and children in the greater metropolitan area of the District of Columbia, serving as a resource throughout the community to effect positive change, seek common ground, and inspire hope.

In honor of their centennial year, the women of the JLW have created the Resolution Read Program, committing themselves to purchasing and distributing 100,000 new books to needy children in the greater Washington, DC, community. This is no small undertaking for a small group of women, but by meeting this goal, many children throughout the area will get a book to call their own. As such, JLW will continue to make a lasting impact in their community by fostering a passion for books and reading where it otherwise might not exist.

I would like to sincerely thank the volunteers of the Junior League of