

Justice Department—had cleared this statement, had signed off on that statement.

Mr. KYL. Precisely. And that is confirmed.

Mr. SANTORUM. What would be the possible reason why someone at a high level of the Justice Department would sign off on a letter which they know would be untrue to basically call into question Chairman THOMPSON's assertion that the Chinese had some plot to influence American elections?

Mr. KYL. To respond to the Senator from Pennsylvania, I am not going to attribute motives to anyone, but it did cast doubt on the claims of the chairman of the committee. Yet a couple of days later, both the ranking minority leader and Senator LIEBERMAN made the point they reviewed the FBI information and they agreed that Chairman THOMPSON's allegations were entirely supported.

Mr. SANTORUM. So in the end everyone agreed that the chairman's original statement was correct, and that really the sole voice of dissent was a Justice Department letter which was intended really just to muddy the waters and cast doubt.

Mr. KYL. Again, to conclude then, and to answer the Senator from Pennsylvania, I cannot ascribe a motive to anyone, but it seems mighty coincidental that at a very critical moment in the committee's deliberations and public hearings great doubt would be cast upon the chairman by the Justice Department of the United States, which is supposed to be conducting an independent, objective—

Mr. SANTORUM. And apolitical investigation.

Mr. KYL. And apolitical investigation. And that I say is the second reason why we believe at this time events warrant the Attorney General to request the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate these matters.

I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, July 22, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,366,067,378,744.76. (Five trillion, three hundred sixty-six billion, sixty-seven million, three hundred seventy-eight thousand, seven hundred forty-four dollars and seventy-six cents)

One year ago, July 22, 1996, the federal debt stood at \$5,169,929,000,000. (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-nine billion, nine hundred twenty-nine million)

Five years ago, July 22, 1992, the federal debt stood at \$3,984,029,000,000. (Three trillion, nine hundred eighty-four billion, twenty-nine million)

Ten years ago, July 22, 1987, the federal debt stood at \$2,314,592,000,000. (Two trillion, three hundred fourteen billion, five hundred ninety-two million)

Fifteen years ago, July 22, 1982, the federal debt stood at \$1,085,930,000,000 (One trillion, eighty-five billion, nine hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,280,137,378,744.76 (Four trillion, two hundred eighty billion, one hundred thirty-seven million, three hundred seventy-eight thousand, seven hundred forty-four dollars and seventy-six cents) during the past 15 years.

HONORING THE BEHRENS ON THEIR 60TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, families are the cornerstone of America. The data are undeniable: Individuals from strong families contribute to the society. In an era when nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of "till death us do part" seriously, demonstrating successfully the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity. These characteristics make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor Brooks and Ray Behrens of Eldon, MO, who on August 3, 1997, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. The Behrens' commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized.

TRIBUTE TO DENISE BODE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, the great success of our Nation is rooted in the labors of millions of Americans who work every day to make America a better place. I'd like to take a moment to recognize one such American—a fellow Oklahoman, Denise Bode, who has dedicated most of her adult life to making our Nation a better place through her work in the public and private sector. Soon she will begin a new chapter of service to the people of Oklahoma. For this reason, I am very proud to take this opportunity to recognize her contributions over the past several years.

Denise Bode became involved in Government right after she graduated from the University of Oklahoma, serving as an adviser to my former Senate colleague David Boren who was the Governor of Oklahoma. When David Boren was elected to the Senate, Denise became a member of his U.S. Senate staff and developed an expertise in energy and tax policies. Even though she was working full time, she somehow found time to take courses at night and earn both a law degree and a masters of law in taxation, and devote time to her son Sean as well as be a helpmate to her husband John Bode, who was an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture in the Reagan Administration.

For the past 6 years she has served as president of the Independent Petro-

leum Association of America, an organization founded in 1929 in Oklahoma and which today is the Nation's largest membership association representing America's oil and natural gas producers. She was the first and so far the only woman to head a major energy trade association.

All of us who have worked with Denise over the years in Washington, regardless of party affiliation, whether in the public or private sector, know her to be a tireless advocate for Oklahoma and always looking out for the best interest of our Nation. She is the type of person who will fight tirelessly for what she believes in. In the process, she has made a difference.

She returns to Oklahoma next month to serve, at the request of Governor Frank Keating, on the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, which oversees both the interest of the consumers in the State and key industries. Ask Denise why she's going back to her native State and she'll say it's because she wants to make a difference; she wants to make Oklahoma an even better place.

We in Washington often talk about devolution, giving more power and responsibility to the States. I certainly believe that is the proper course of action. Knowing that Denise and other extremely capable people are leading the way in the States gives me added confidence in this policy. And once again, Denise is going where her beliefs lead her.

I wish her well in this endeavor and feel very confident that she will give to this new position the same dedication and commitment she's given throughout her years of public service.

MARY FRANCES BURNS, 1909-1997

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, on July 14, 1997 Mary Frances Burns died in Gallatin, MO. She was born there, a daughter of a farmer and stockman and a sister to four brothers and two sisters. She married Russell Burns in 1931 and they farmed just northwest of Gallatin all of their lives.

Mom was so typical of the farm women of the American prairies. She was wife, partner, mother, homemaker, field hand, and gardener. She could coach younger girls in 4H, teach a Sunday School class, attend a school board meeting, cook all three of the daily meals, keep an old gas powered Maytag wash machine going, and still have time to play an active role in Democratic Party politics.

She and her husband were married 61 years until dad died in 1992. They navigated this family through the droughts of the 1930's and the Great Depression. Yet through it all, she maintained a great sense of faith and humor. The times were hard in the Depression as anybody who lived in that era could attest. The actions and conversations of mom and dad were always of hope and optimism in the American dream, of the American system, and their dream of a better life.