

Second, let me remind my colleagues, especially those who have offered such fierce criticism of the Administration's efforts in recent days, of the need for a sense of proportion. Let me point out that the Administration is not threatening, as the Bush Administration did with settlement assistance, to cut off any kind of aid to Israel in this dispute. It is simply playing the role mediators should play in offering creative ideas, and allowing the parties to make their own decision about whether those ideas are acceptable to them.

Third, let me commend the Administration on remaining engaged in the peace process, a process for which many Israelis—including most recently Prime Minister Rabin—have given their lives. President Clinton has been a strong friend of Israel, and the Administration is right to press the parties to come to a final agreement, to offer solutions which can bridge gaps, to ensure that proposals are on the table from a neutral mediator which one side could perhaps not accept from their adversary, but could accept from a third party.

The administration has done so, I believe, because it knows that the success of these efforts is crucial to fulfilling longstanding American commitments to preserve the peace process, ensure Israel's security, enhance regional stability, and protect U.S. interests in the Middle East. Most urgently, the President recognizes that without a peaceful permanent resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel's security—clearly a vital U.S. interest—can never be guaranteed. Let us not forget one thing in all of this, Mr. President: peace is the ultimate guarantor of Israel's security.

Finally, let me ask my colleagues to contemplate what could happen if the Administration did not press to preserve this process, and it collapsed—as it almost surely would without such intervention. An alternative scenario, with the peace process in a shambles—an escalation in terrorist attacks, Israel facing newly hostile Arab neighbors on all sides, and increased pressure from the Arab street for violent action against her—is frightening to consider.

Some here in Washington act as if the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate of the past fifteen months does not pose dangers for all sides. I think they are wrong. It poses very grave dangers to Israel, to the Palestinians, and to the whole region. That's why the President's approach of urging the parties to uphold their commitments, facilitating ongoing contacts and negotiations, helping each side understand the other's legitimate security and other needs, and presenting creative ideas intended to help bridge gaps between the parties, makes sense.

Senator FEINSTEIN observed on the floor last week that the Administration's attempts to facilitate an agreement between the parties efforts were

“principled, worthy efforts . . . grounded in a deep commitment to Israel's security.” I agree with that assessment, and join her, Senator LAUTENBERG, and others in calling for restraint by my colleagues who have unfairly criticized the Administration during this difficult and sensitive time in the peace process. Of course, offering principled, thoughtful critiques of Administration foreign policy-making is a legitimate role of Congress, an important aspect of our system of checks and balances. But it is a right accompanied by a responsibility to be fair and informed.

Mr. President, the recent crisis in the peace negotiations coincides with Israel's celebration of her 50-year jubilee, an occasion of great joy for all of us who love Israel. With the founding of modern Israel, the Children of Abraham and Sara, survivors of over 2000 years of persecution and exile, were home at last and free at last. But Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion's dream, and that of his allies, was not simply to provide a safe haven from centuries of Jewish suffering. It was also about fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of making Israel “a light unto the nations,” a powerful sign and symbol of justice and compassion to all peoples of the world.

Although it's fitting that we pause this year to celebrate all that the people of Israel have accomplished over these past 50 years, we must also look forward to the tasks which face her in the next millennium, chief among them the task of building a just, secure and lasting peace. It is my deepest prayer that our children and grandchildren, fifty years from this year, will be able to say with gratitude that we were the generation which overcame ancient hatreds, and enabled them to achieve a just and lasting peace which has by then embraced the entire region and all its peoples. That is a vision worthy of Israel's founder, and of all those who come after. It is a vision for which we should and must be willing to struggle, to fight for, for which all must continue to take risks.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is coming to the U.S. this week, and will be meeting with Secretary Albright. I have heard from sources both in the Administration and in Israel that the Israeli government is actually close to reaching internal agreement on a variation of the Administration's proposed plan. I hope that is true, and that all the parties will reassess their positions in light of recent developments, and agree this week to take one more important step toward resolving this longstanding and bitter dispute, thereby helping to forge a just and lasting peace for the region worthy of Israel's founders' dream. ●

CREDIT UNION MEMBERSHIP

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to support legislation protecting the 70 million Americans who belong to credit unions from being stripped of their

financial security and to allow tens of millions of others, who currently are denied access to a credit union, to become members.

One of the most important financial assets our country has, Mr. President, is our extensive system of not-for-profit, community-based credit unions. Credit unions provide unique and valuable services to members, most of whom work for small businesses. Credit unions offer their members lower costs, higher returns, lower loan rates and greater convenience. They nonetheless provide important benefits to their members and crucial competition in the financial services marketplace.

But credit unions have been put in significant danger by a recent Supreme Court decision. That Court ruled that attempts by the National Credit Union Administration during the Reagan Administration to more broadly interpret the 1982 “common bond” requirement for membership are beyond the scope of original intent.

The Court's interpretation of this requirement could result in over 10 million Americans being forced out of their credit unions. It also means that small businesses with fewer than 500 employees—the engine of economic growth in this country—are barred from offering credit union memberships to their employees.

Clearly, in the wake of the Court's ruling, the laws pertaining to credit union membership must be modified. Credit Unions have a proud history of providing important benefits without cost to either businesses or taxpayers. In Michigan alone 4 million people avail themselves of these benefits, and they should be protected against unfair limitations on credit union membership. What is more, the growth of credit unions in America has coincided with a significant expansion of earnings for community bankers, another crucial financial services asset for our people and our economy. As reported by the ABA Banking Journal's Annual Community Banking Earnings Report, the vast majority of community bankers believe that earnings will continue expanding, seeing no threat from credit union expansion.

There is no reason, in my view, to see credit union expansion as anything but a significant benefit for our people and our economy. That is why I am supporting legislation authored by Senator D'AMATO, modelled after H.R. 1151, legislation that already has passed the House. This legislation will grant credit unions authority to add Select Employee Groups of 3,000 or less to their membership.

This legislation also sets a moderate cap on commercial loans in the interest of fairness and consensus. In my opinion, such a requirement was necessary to respond to some of the concerns raised in response to extended membership.

The critical issue, Mr. President, is whether we are going to allow credit unions to continue to provide important services at reasonable cost to a

vast and growing number of Americans, or impose new regulatory burdens on one of our economy's most important assets. I believe it is crucial that we save credit unions from undue limitations, and that this legislation will achieve that goal without harming any other industry. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. •

FIFTH CLASS OF INDUCTEES INTO THE CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the fifth class of inductees into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. These five women gained recognition in fields of nature, justice, the arts, and finance and represent the best of my state and of our nation.

I want to take this opportunity to speak about each of this year's inductees.

Dorrit Hoffleit, a resident of New Haven, Connecticut, has established herself as a premiere astronomer through her work as senior researcher at Yale University. For over seventy years she has studied astronomy and has received an undergraduate degree from Radcliffe in mathematics and a doctorate from Harvard. Her interest in stars began early in her childhood when she saw two stars collide.

During World War II, Professor Hoffleit worked as a mathematician at the Ballistic Research Laboratories at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. It is here that she felt the effects of being a female in a male-dominated field. She was paid less for doing the same work as her male colleagues. In fact, despite her doctorate she still received a sub-professional ranking. However, she protested this treatment and as a result was given her due rank and ultimately transferred to Washington.

In 1956, she went on to direct the Maria Mitchell Observatory in Nantucket, Mass. Her work there helped to provide women with more substantial opportunities in astronomy. An indication of her success is that twenty-five percent of the students who worked with Professor Hoffleit have gone on to become professional astronomers.

As a member of the Yale research faculty, Professor Hoffleit has made immense academic contributions to her field. She is most renowned for her two star catalogs. Her most well known catalog, *The Bright Star Catalogue*, has been defined as "the bible of virtually every stellar astronomer."

Despite retiring from Yale over twenty years ago, Professor Hoffleit continues to go to work every day. In these past twenty years, she has not drawn a salary. She is dedicated to educating her colleagues and future astronomers, rather than promoting herself and her career. As a result of her profound selflessness and service, the effects of her efforts will be as limitless as the stars she has spent a lifetime studying.

A second inductee is Judge Constance Baker Motley. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Judge Motley first became interested in civil rights after being denied admission into a local public beach and skating rink.

After graduating from high school, she was unable to afford college, so she worked for \$50 a month refinishing furniture. She continued to be active and to voice her beliefs, despite her inability to further her education. A local philanthropist, Clarence Blakeslee, heard her speak at the Youth Council in 1939, and he was so impressed with her that he offered to pay for her education. She graduated from New York University in 1943, and three years later received her law degree from Columbia University.

After graduating from Columbia, she worked full time for the Legal Defense and Educational Fund of the NAACP, under then chief counsel Thurgood Marshall. She worked there for twenty years as a staff member and associate counsel and she was known for her impressive skill as an oral advocate. During her time at the Legal Defense and Educational Fund she argued before the Supreme Court ten times, winning nine appeals. She is renowned for her work with Thurgood Marshall and others on the landmark *Brown versus Board of Education* case.

Judge Motley entered politics in 1964, serving in the New York State Senate. In 1965 she became the first woman to serve as a City Borough President. During this time, she worked on ways to improve the inner-city through better housing and schools. In 1966, she became the first African-American woman to be appointed to a federal judgeship in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. As a federal judge she continued to break new ground. In 1982 she was made chief judge and in 1986 was appointed senior judge. Neither position had ever been held by a woman before her.

Judge Motley's work for justice over five decades has been responsible for some of the most extraordinary changes in American culture during our history. She has received many awards and honorary degrees for her immense contributions to civil rights and the legal profession.

A third inductee is Rosa Ponselle. Born Rosa Melba Ponzillo, she was a first generation American, the daughter of Italian immigrants who settled in Meriden, Connecticut. She began studying music and singing at age ten. Her musical break came at eighteen when she auditioned for the great opera legend, Enrico Caruso. Immediately after auditioning, she was cast in the role of Leonora in the Metropolitan Opera's staging of Verdi's "La Forza del Destino." She remained loyal to the Metropolitan throughout her career, and she spent all but four seasons of her nineteen-year career performing there. In fact, she was the first American-trained singer to star at the Metropolitan.

Ms. Ponselle shocked the opera world when she retired in 1937. She dedicated the remaining forty-four years of her life to helping train and teach aspiring young operatic youths. One of her most notable students was Placido Domingo. She also served as the artistic director of the Baltimore Civic Opera Company. She died in Baltimore in May 1991.

Her voice was said to exude a blend of youthfulness and maturity and she remains an inspiration to opera students and audiences worldwide.

Lillian Vernon, another inductee, is a resident of Greenwich, Connecticut. She is the founder and CEO of Lillian Vernon Corporation. She entered the industry of mail order catalogues in the 1950's when it was dominated by industry moguls such as Richard Sears and A. Montgomery Ward. The company, which began in 1951, was one of the first to offer personalized merchandise by mail. The corporation was the first company founded by a woman to be publicly traded on the American Stock Exchange.

Ms. Vernon also does a great deal of charity work. She serves on the boards of various non-profit organizations, including the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, New York University's College of Arts and Science, and the Children's Museum. She has been honored for her work as a business leader and community activist. She received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the Big Brothers-Big Sisters National Hero Award, and the Direct Marketing Hall of Fame Award. Ms. Vernon is a remarkable entrepreneur, businesswoman, and role model.

The final inductee is Mabel Osgood Wright. She was a resident of Fairfield, Connecticut and was the founder and President of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Wright established the first bird sanctuary in the United States, naming it Birdcraft. She founded the sanctuary around the turn of the century, fearing that bird life was being gradually eradicated.

Wright saw conservation education as a key element to sustaining wildlife. She wrote many books in an effort to introduce children to nature appreciation and conservation. She published a field guide to New England birds in 1895. During this time, the Audubon movement was still young and was lacking public support. Through her involvement she helped to revive the organization on the state level. Aside from serving as President of the Connecticut Audubon Society, she served as an officer of the national group and as an editor and writer for *Bird Lore* magazine.

It is said that Wright was unique in the environmental movement. This is because she was a nature writer as well as a community leader and her message focused not on the protection of our national parks but the preservation of our backyards, our gardens, and our bird sanctuaries. She believed the best way to preserve nature was through teaching children how to do it.