

The State of Israel became a home for Jews after more than 6 million European Jews were massacred during the Holocaust. Over the past 50 years, Israel has acted as a refuge for thousands of Jews throughout the world and integrated them into their society, while rebuilding a nation and creating an active democratic political system.

On May 17, I joined Mayor Edward Rendell and Israeli Consul General Daniel Ashbel in Philadelphia to celebrate Israel's 50th Independence Day birthday party. During the opening ceremonies, I thought of how Israel is a land of wonderful contrast. It is both a nation of great history and a nation of great accomplishment. From the historical perspective, the events that have sprung forth from that land over the centuries are overwhelming to even consider. No matter what religious tradition one might follow, the basic laws that went on to frame many of the tenants of our democratic form of government, and the rules of conduct in a civil society, came out of the land we have always called Yis-ra-el.

Today, Israel has a growing economy, farms on land that were once claimed by the deserts, and high-tech companies producing cutting edge products for our global marketplace. No other society in the course of human history can claim such progress in 50 short years. No other nation can claim to have risen to these heights from the horrors of the Holocaust. That is why Israel is so unique, so special, and so deserving of our unyielding and unconditional support.

The United States has always maintained a relationship with Israel that is based on mutual respect. America's commitment to Israel's security undergirds the entire peace process and provides Israel the confidence it needs to take very real risks for peace. I encourage the United States to continue to act in a respectable manner by not imposing a settlement on Israel that is contrary to its national security interests.●

WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION COMPETITION

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the following students from Dunwoody High School in Dunwoody, Georgia and their teacher for their excellent performance in the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution. I would like to congratulate the students who competed in this year's competition: Bakari Brock, Jennifer Campbell, Richard Cartwright, Michael Cayes, Carol Chandler, Melissa Chastney, Zack Cullens, Melissa Derrick, Kevin Franklin, Erin Green, Judy Hudgins, Rebecca Lamb, Dwayne O'Mard, Sandra Park, Andrea Pierce, Jennifer Price, Scot Prudhomme, Carlyn Sibley, Geren Stone, Dannon Taylor, David Weiner, David Yoo, and teacher Celeste Boemker. I would also like to recognize the efforts of the

State Coordinator, Michele Collins and District Coordinator, John Carr, who helped these students make it to the finals.

This bright group of young students competed against 49 other classes from around the nation, testing their knowledge of the United States Constitution and our government. Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the program is the most extensive of its kind, reaching more than 26 million students in elementary, middle and high schools. The students spent hours in role playing and testing to prepare themselves for this competition. The three-day program simulates a Congressional hearing in which students' presentations are judged on the basis of their knowledge of constitutional principles and their ability to apply them to historical and contemporary issues.

Mr. President, it is with great pride that I offer my congratulations to these students from Dunwoody High School for their outstanding performance at the We the People competition, and wish them continuing success with their future studies.●

CONTINUING JUDICIAL VACANCY CRISIS IN THE SECOND CIRCUIT

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate's Republican leadership is refusing to take action to end the judicial emergency in the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

On March 25, the five continuing vacancies on the 13-member court caused Chief Judge Ralph Winter to certify a Circuit emergency, to begin canceling hearings and to take the unprecedented step of having 3-judge panels convened that include only one Second Circuit judge. On April 23, Chief Judge Winter was forced to issue additional emergency orders. For two months and into the foreseeable future the Senate has neglected its responsibility to the people of the Second Circuit.

I have been urging favorable Senate action on the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Second Circuit to fill a longstanding vacancy for many months. That nomination remains stalled on the Senate calendar. Two weeks ago the nomination of Chester J. Straub to the Second Circuit was favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee. That nomination is now also on the Senate calendar awaiting action. Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee is favorably reporting two additional nominees to the Second Circuit, Judge Rosemary Pooler and Robert Sack. That makes four nominees to the Second Circuit awaiting confirmation, four nominees who can end the judicial vacancies crisis that plagues the Second Circuit. But for the inaction of the Majority Leader in calling for votes by the Senate on this qualified nominees, the crisis could end this week. I, again, urge that action.

Before the last recess I introduced legislation calling upon the Senate to address this kind of judicial emergency

before it takes another extended recess. The Senate has pending before it four outstanding nominees to the Second Circuit whose confirmations would end this crisis.

Unfortunately Republican Senate leadership has not taken the judicial vacancies crisis seriously and has failed to take the concerted action needed to end it. They continue to perpetuate vacancies in almost one in 10 federal judgeships.

With 11 nominees on the Senate calendar and 32 pending in Committee, we could be making a difference if we would take our responsibilities to the federal courts seriously and devote the time necessary to consider these nominations and confirm them. Instead, we are having hearings at a rate on one a month, barely keeping up with attrition and hardly making a dent in the vacancies crisis that the Chief Justice of the United States has called the most serious problem confronting the judiciary.

By a vote of 16 to 2, the Judiciary Committee reported the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Senate. That was on March 5, 1998, over two months ago. No action has been taken or scheduled on that nomination and no explanation for the delay has been forthcoming. This is the oldest judicial nomination pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. In spite of an April 8 letter to the Senate Republican Leader signed by all six Senators from the three States forming the Second Circuit urging prompt action, this nomination continues to be stalled by anonymous objections. Our bipartisan letter to the Majority Leader asked that he call up for prompt consideration by the Senate the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor. That was over one month ago.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor is a qualified nominee who was confirmed to the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in 1992 after being nominated by President Bush. She attended Princeton University and Yale Law School. She worked for over four years in the New York District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney and was in private practice with Pavia & Harcourt in New York. She is strongly supported by Senator MOYNIHAN and Senator D'AMATO.

She is a source of pride to Puerto Rican and other Hispanic supporters and to women. When confirmed she will be only the second woman and second judge of Puerto Rican descent to serve on the Second Circuit.

Judge Rosemary Pooler was nominated back on November 6, 1997, as was Robert Sack, a partner in the law firm of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher. They participated in a confirmation hearing on May 14 and were reported to the Senate by the Judiciary Committee today.

Since May 7 the fourth pending nomination to the Second Circuit, that of Chester J. Straub, has also been on the

Senate calendar. Mr. Straub is a partner in the law firm of Willkie Farr & Gallagher.

Judge Sotomayor, Judge Pooler, Robert Sack and Chester Straub can and should all be confirmed to the Second Circuit before the Senate adjourns for its Memorial Day recess.

In his most recent Report on the Judiciary the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court warned that persisting vacancies would harm the administration of justice. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court pointedly declared: "Vacancies cannot remain at such high levels indefinitely without eroding the quality of justice that traditionally has been associated with the federal judiciary."

The people and businesses in the Second Circuit need additional federal judges confirmed by the Senate. Indeed, the Judicial Conference of the United States recommends that in addition to the 5 vacancies, the Second Circuit be allocated an additional 2 judgeships to handle its workload. The Second Circuit is suffering harm from Senate inaction. That is why the Chief Judge of the Second Circuit had to declare the Circuit in a state of emergency.

Must we wait for the administration of justice to disintegrate further before the Senate will take this crisis seriously and act on the nominees pending before it? I pray not.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO EAST HIGH SCHOOL, FINALIST IN THE WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

● Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the students from East High School in Denver, CO who participated in the "We the People . . . the Citizen and the Constitution" finals held here in our Nation's Capital, May 2-4, 1998. East High School competed against 49 other classes from across the Nation. Their hard work was rewarded with an Honorable mention as one of the top ten finalists in the competition.

I am always pleased when I have the opportunity to come to the Senate floor to praise students that have taken an interest in their government and their Constitution. By taking part in this competition, the students of East High School have served to strengthen the foundation of our democracy.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the participants, Daniel Berson, Lisa Bianco, Rosemary Blosser, Tristan Bridges, John Patrick Crum, Jessica Dismang, Belle Duggan, Sterling Ekwo, Heidi Gehret, Sarah Givens, Jamaal Harmon, Courtney Hopley, Scott Kronewitter, Melanie McRae, Jennifer Newman, Gavin Rember, Jennifer Roche, Sarah Showalter, Jessica Slenger, Lauren Strickland, Matthew Vellone, Feliz Ventura, Michaela Welch, and their teacher Ms. Deanna Morrison for doing

such a fine job of representing Colorado.

I cannot overstate the achievements of these young people, they are some of the best and brightest that America has to offer. I am proud to say that I, along with all Coloradans, congratulate East High School on a job well done.●

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MEN'S ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the University of Michigan hockey team on their 1998 NCAA Championship—The Wolverines' second hockey title in three years.

On Saturday, April 4th, the Michigan hockey team defeated Boston College (3-2) in overtime for the championship. This is a remarkable achievement for a team which lost nine senior players from last year's team, including the Hobey Baker trophy winner and 5 players who each scored 20 or more goals in the season. The 1997-98 Michigan team featured 10 freshmen, one of whom scored two goals in the final game, and another who scored the winning goal in overtime in the championship game.

When the 1997-98 season started, it was expected to be a rebuilding year for the Wolverines. The young team faced a difficult season against some of the toughest teams in the nation. Instead, the Michigan team earned a 34-11-1 record, seizing every chance to display their athleticism, sportsmanship, teamwork, and perseverance.

The University of Michigan ice hockey players have always been among the "leaders and best." As the Wolverines celebrate this year's victory, they also commemorate the anniversary of their first NCAA title fifty years ago, when the tournament began. In the last 50 years, the Wolverines have brought nine championship titles back to Ann Arbor, making them the winningest team in NCAA men's ice hockey history.

The "Victors" are indebted to the strong leadership they have from Head Coach Red Berenson and players, Captain Matt Herr and Assistant Captains Bill Muckalt and Marty Turco. These three seniors, along with Chris Fox and Gregg Malicke, advanced to the Final Four four seasons in a row. In addition, senior Bill Muckalt was named a Hobey Baker award candidate and All-American player, and senior goaltender Marty Turco finished his college career with one of the most impressive records in college hockey. The goalie's four years at Michigan gave him a record of 127 career victories and nine victories in NCAA elimination games, making him the winningest goaltender in NCAA tournament history. Turco was also selected most valuable player in the Final Four after stopping 28 shots in the championship game.

I extend my best wishes to the University of Michigan Men's Ice Hockey Team on a tremendous season and the 1998 NCAA Championship—Go Blue!●

LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

● Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of a charitable contribution worthy of note. Lymphatic filariasis is a terrible disease that our citizens are not likely to see here in the United States, but it is one of the World's most disabling and disfiguring diseases. It affects people in 73 countries, mainly in tropical and subtropical areas of India, Africa, Asia and South America.

The disease is caused by a parasite, carried by mosquitoes. Efforts to eliminate mosquitoes have not been successful in these regions, and the result is an endless cycle of infection for human hosts.

The World Health Organization has embarked on a campaign to stop this dread disease. Lymphatic filariasis infects 76 million people world wide. The parasitic worms, often only the size of a thread, live in humans by lodging in the lymphatic system. They live for up to six years, producing millions of microscopic larvae that circulate in the blood. When symptoms appear, they can be devastating. Kidney damage and painful swelling of the extremities are typical examples of the suffering endured by these victims.

The best previous defense against this disease was the administration of a single dose of two drugs, diethylcarbamazine of DEC and ivermectin. But when these drugs are administered at the same time with another drug, albendazole, the treatment is much more effective. Albendazole additionally kills hookworm, a very severe problem, especially in Africa.

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization's Division of Tropical Diseases announced a program to eliminate lymphatic filariasis. The cornerstone of this eradication program rests on the most generous charitable contribution in history. SmithKline Beecham, one of the world's leading healthcare companies, announced that they will provide their drug albendazole free of charge for the WHO effort. In addition to the drug donation, they are providing significant financial support to WHO to help implement the eradication program.

Yesterday, SmithKline Beecham testified before the House Committee on International Relations during a hearing on the Eradication and Elimination of Six Infectious Diseases. Dr. David Heymann, WHO's Director of Emerging and Communicable Diseases was also testifying. Dr. Heymann has been a great resource and help to me as I've learned about the growing problem of global viral and bacterial epidemics.

The hearing was worth noting, because it featured the contributions of many in the private sector to eradicate disease. Rotary International has made great progress in their effort to eliminate polio around the world. Merck & Co. has very generously, provided their drug Mectizan for the control of River Blindness, another filarial parasitic disease.