Finally, Mr. President, I would again like to commend Senators Jeffords, DeWine, Kennedy, and Wellstone, as well as Chairman Goodling, Congressmen Clay, Kildee, and Martinez for the important role they each played in making this conference agreement a reality. I have worked closely with myself and my staff to address numerous concerns and for that I would like to thank them.

Mr. Wellstone. Mr. President, I am extremely pleased we are about to pass this important conference report. I look forward to voting in favor of the legislation. Ms. Pelosi, I thank her for her diligent efforts in making sure this important legislation is completed.

I have spoken on numerous occasions regarding the subject. As the Ranking Democrat on the Senate Labor Subcommittee on Employment and Training, I have worked hard with my colleagues Senator DeWine, Senator Jeffords and Senator Kennedy to help bring us to where we are this evening. I thank them for their efforts, as do my assistants who have worked directly with me and my staff during the months of hearings, preparations, debate and drafting.

The conference bill preserves important policy principles contained in the Senate bill. It helps consolidate, streamline and decentralize our federal job training system. At the same time, it will make that system more accountable to real performance measures. It gives private sector employers—the people who have jobs to offer and who need workers with the right skills—a greater role in directing policy at the state and local level, which is where most decision-making power resides in this bill. The bill retains crucial federal priorities, then allows state and local authorities to decide how best to address their needs.

I am also particularly pleased that the Conference Agreement also implements the accessibility and quality of adult literacy and education programs. Indeed, more aggressive adult literacy programs are essential if we are to ensure that everyone in the workforce has an ability to read.

Lastly, the Conference Agreement re-authorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In doing so, it links vocational rehabilitation to the new workforce system, while maintaining a separate funding stream for vocational rehabilitation. This will provide improved training and employment services to individuals with disabilities.

I want to thank Chairman Jeffords, Senator Kennedy, Senator DeWine, and Senator Wellstone, and their staffs, for their efforts on this important legislation and for working with me to address issues affecting Rhode Island.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Jeffords. Mr. President, I now renew my unanimous consent request. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the conference report is agreed to.

Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations

Mr. Jeffords. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 477, H.R. 1085. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1085) to revise, codify and enact without substantive change certain general and permanent laws, related to patriotic and national observances, ceremonies, and organizations, as title 36, United States Code, "Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies and Organizations."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. Jeffords. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed at the appropriate place in the Record. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1085) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.