

(c) DISTRICT JUDGE.—Section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to North Dakota the following:

“Northern Mariana Islands 1”.

(d) BANKRUPTCY JUDGE.—Section 152(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2) by inserting after the item relating to North Dakota the following:

“Northern Mariana Islands 0”;

and

(2) in paragraph (4) in the first sentence by inserting “and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands” after “territories”.

(e) ASSIGNMENT OF JUDGES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 13 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 297 the following:

“§ 298. Assignment to the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands

“In addition to the judges authorized to be designated by sections 291 and 292, the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit may assign judges of courts of record of the Northern Mariana Islands or Guam, including a judge of the District Court of Guam who is appointed by the President or a recalled senior judge of the District Court of Guam, to serve temporarily as a judge in the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands whenever such an assignment is necessary for the proper dispatch of the business of the court. Such designated judges shall have the powers of a magistrate judge under section 636.”.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 13 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to section 297 the following:

“298. Assignment to the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

(f) JUDICIAL CONFERENCES OF CIRCUITS.—Section 333 of title 28, United States Code, is amended in the third sentence of the first undesignated paragraph by striking “the District Court of the Virgin Islands, and the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands” and inserting “and the District Court of the Virgin Islands”.

(g) JUDGE IN TERRITORIES AND POSSESSIONS.—Section 373 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking “the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.”; and

(2) in subsection (e) by striking “the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

(h) ANNUITIES FOR SURVIVORS OF CERTAIN JUDICIAL OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED STATES.—Section 376(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B) by striking “, the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(B) by striking “, the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

(i) SAVINGS PROVISIONS.—The amendments made by subsections (a) through (h) of this section shall not affect the rights of any judge who may have retired before the effective date of this section. Service as a judge of the District Court of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be included in computing under sections 371, 372, 373, and 376 of title 28, United States Code, the aggregate years of judicial service of any person who is in office as a district judge for the District of the Northern Mariana Islands on the effective date of this section. The term of office of any

such judge shall terminate upon a vacancy in the office by expiration of the term or otherwise. Upon such termination, the President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a judge for the district who shall hold office during good behavior.

(j) UNITED STATES ATTORNEY.—Section 541 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by inserting before the period the following: “, except that any United States attorney appointed for the Northern Mariana Islands may at the same time serve as United States attorney in another judicial district”; and

(2) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d) and inserting after subsection (b) the following:

“(c) If the President appoints a United States attorney for the Northern Mariana Islands who at that time is serving in the same capacity in another district, the appointment shall, without prejudice to a subsequent appointment, be for the unexpired term of such United States attorney.”.

(k) UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE.—Section 561(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding after the second sentence the following: “If the President appoints a marshal for the Northern Mariana Islands who at that time is serving in the same capacity in another district, the appointment shall, without prejudice to a subsequent appointment, be for the unexpired term of such marshal.”.

(l) UNITED STATES MAGISTRATES.—Section 631(b)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting “the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,” after “Puerto Rico.”.

(m) INTERLOCUTORY DECISIONS.—Section 1292(d)(4)(A) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “, the District Court of the Virgin Islands, or the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands,” and inserting “, or the District Court of the Virgin Islands.”.

(n) JURISDICTION OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT.—Section 1295(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking “, the District Court of the Virgin Islands, or the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands,” and inserting “, or the District Court of the Virgin Islands.”; and

(2) in paragraph (2) by striking “, the District Court of the Virgin Islands, or the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands,” and inserting “, or the District Court of the Virgin Islands.”.

(o) DIVERSITY JURISDICTION.—Section 1332(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico” and inserting “, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands”.

(p) CIVIL COMMITMENT AND REHABILITATION OF NARCOTICS ADDICTS.—Section 2901(e) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking “or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” and inserting “the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”.

(q) NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS JUDICIAL PROVISIONS.—The Act of November 8, 1977 (Public Law 95-157; 91 Stat. 1265) is amended—

(1) in section 4(a) (48 U.S.C. 1824(a))—

(A) by striking “(a)”;

(B) by striking all beginning with “, unless those cases are reviewable in the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands” through the period and inserting a period; and

(C) by striking subsection (b); and

(2) by striking—

(A) the first section (48 U.S.C. 1821);

(B) section 2 (48 U.S.C. 1822);

(C) section 3 (48 U.S.C. 1823);

(D) section 5 (48 U.S.C. 1825); and

(E) section 6 (48 U.S.C. 1826).

(r) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, including such sums as may be necessary to provide appropriate space and facilities for the judicial positions created by this section.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Friday, September 25, 1998, at 10 a.m. in closed session, to receive a briefing on the worldwide threat and status of U.S. military forces and potential operational requirements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Friday, September 25, 1998, at 9:30 a.m. to hold two hearings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Governmental Affairs Committee to meet on Friday, September 25, 1998, at 9:30 a.m. for a hearing on the topic of “Improving the Safety of Food Imports.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNITION OF DR. MADAN M. BHASIN

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. Madan Bhasin for being awarded the 1999 Industrial Chemistry Award by the American Chemical Society. This honor is annually bestowed to recognize outstanding contributions to industrial chemistry that have resulted in the commercialization of an economically significant new product or process. I am always proud when West Virginians are recognized for their outstanding contributions to society. However, this is an especially nice case since Dr. Bhasin’s work also demonstrates how great ideas can improve a company’s profit margin and save resources at the same time.

Dr. Bhasin received his B.Sc. from the University of Delhi and his Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame in 1958 and has been with Union Carbide since 1963. During his 35 year career at the Union Carbide Technical Center in

South Charleston, West Virginia, he has devoted his efforts to researching and applying catalysts to create new production methods and help improve existing industrial processes. His invention and implementation of nine generations of ethylene epoxidation catalysts led to his recognition by the American Chemical Society. The catalysts that Dr. Bhasin invented allow for the more efficient conversion of ethylene epoxidation to ethylene oxide and ethylene glycol, which are components in products such as polyester and anti-freeze. Billions of pounds of ethylene epoxidation are used each year so increasing the conversion efficiency has allowed Union Carbide to remain one of the world leaders in this market as well as save energy and reduce by-products. This is obviously a win for Union Carbide, the environment and the state of West Virginia.

Again I would like to take this opportunity to publically recognize and congratulate Dr. Bhasin for this great accolade and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.●

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT OF 1998

● Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am here today to talk about some good news for a change. I want to talk about the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1998 that Senator McCAIN is introducing, and I am cosponsoring. The purpose of this legislation is to link some of the amazing innovations in wireless technology to 9-1-1 and emergency response professionals.

All kinds of technologies exist today that can greatly reduce response time to emergencies and help victims get the right kind of medical attention quickly. But right now these technologies are not connected in ways that we can use them for emergencies. That's why this effort to upgrade our 9-1-1 systems across the nation is so important and necessary.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has conducted studies showing that crash-to-care time for fatal accidents is about a half hour in urban areas. In rural areas, which covers most of my home state of Montana, that crash-to-care time almost doubles. On average, it takes just shy of an hour to get emergency attention to crash victims in rural areas. Almost half of the serious crash victims who do not receive care in that first hour die at the scene of the accident. That's a scary statistic. But it doesn't have to continue that way.

Drew Dawson, who is the Director of the Montana Emergency Medical Services Bureau and president of the National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Directors, strongly supports this legislation. He tells me that the bill will help bring better wireless 9-1-1 coverage to Montana and will enhance our statewide Trauma Care System. Mr. Dawson believes this legislation will help him and his emer-

gency folks do their job better, which means it will help them save more lives than they already do.

Montana unfortunately has a high motor vehicle crash death rate. Part of this bill promotes research on something called Automatic Crash Notification technology or ACN as Mr. Dawson and the trauma and emergency professionals call it. ACN technology takes the sensors in cars, such as airbag sensors and speed sensors, and links them to a wireless phone and a location device. When an ACN-equipped car in a remote area of Montana crashes, the car automatically dials 9-1-1. Not only does the car dial 9-1-1 but it transmits data telling the emergency operator where exactly the crash victim is and the likelihood of the victim's injuries. This ACN system also opens up a voice channel enabling the emergency operator to speak to the crash victim.

ACN technology comes into effect only seconds after the crash. It can be rigged so that the emergency operator gets the crash information as well as the nearest trauma center. ACN would eliminate many drawn out search and rescues that usually have to take place.

In these crash situations, time is of the essence. The emergency medical professionals refer to the first hour after a crash as the "Golden Hour." They say if they can get to victims in that first hour, then they have a good chance of limiting the severity of the injuries. Once the clock ticks over an hour, the chances of medical miracles lessen more and more. Reducing response time means the difference between life and death.

I have to say a word about all of the good work that folks like Drew Dawson in Montana and other emergency professionals do all over the country. The United States has the most skilled and dedicated group of medical and emergency professionals in the world. We just need to give them better tools. There is technology out there that can help these professionals and that can help all of us citizens, if, God forbid, we ever find ourselves in an emergency situation needing this kind of help. The Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1998 will help all of us and will make our emergency services even better than they are today.

Mr. President, I hope all of my colleagues will join me and help pass this important legislation.●

RECOGNIZING THE CITIZENS AGAINST LAWSUIT ABUSE (CALA)

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize today the efforts of a group of West Virginia citizens who have joined together to address an important issue affecting our state and the nation. These individuals, who have formed Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (CALA), are working to educate the public about how excesses in our civil justice system can be harmful.

CALA volunteer spokespersons are speaking out about how lawsuit abuse

means people pay through higher prices for consumer products, higher medical expenses, higher taxes and lost business expansion and product development. I should note that my own concerns relate to abuse of the system which comes in the form of frivolous suits and inappropriate delays—not legitimate use of our tort system.

CALA reports that recent studies of liability costs have found that our State has a high lawsuit and liability cost relative to our economic output measured as gross state product. As another example of the effect of lawsuit abuse, CALA's own survey of all West Virginia municipalities last year found an estimated annual lawsuit-related cost for our municipal taxpayers to be more than \$9 million. Nationally, it has been estimated that the costs of our civil justice system averages \$1200 per person per year.

Legal reform of any kind is not a simple issue. The legal system is essential to provide justice to every American. But that does not mean that the status quo is perfect. When lawsuits and the courts can be used in excess or result in imposing costs without reason on the other parties, from individuals to not-for-profit agencies to businesses, the system should be reviewed and reformed if possible.

I often have spoken about the problems of our product liability system. We see the terrible consequences of our country's confusing patchwork, slow, and often unfair system of product liability rules that need to be properly and fairly reformed.

The leaders of West Virginia's CALA movement should be commended here today. Volunteers such as Robert Mauk of Huntington; Jim Thomas, Sid Davis and Mac McJunkin of Charleston; Cuz Blake of Bridgeport; Phyllis Garner of Clarksburg; Rick Pruitte of Fairmont; and Sam Chico of Morgantown are all working hard to ensure that our State has a strong, fair and effective civil justice system that will serve all West Virginians and grow our economy and job base. These people give their time to speak to community groups, organize educational activities and distribute materials to help us all be conscious of lawsuit costs and excesses of the system.

Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse groups have declared September 21 through 26 to be "Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week" in West Virginia. I want to commend these citizens for their dedication and commitment and to acknowledge this week as time of public awareness on the serious issues associated with lawsuit abuse.●

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on the Executive Calendar: Nos. 824