

"We've made great strides in the last few years," he said, "but there's still room for improvement."

As Thornton noted, if you've been working in the United States for the last decade, chances are that you're feeling safer on the job today than you did 10 years ago. That's because overall rates of worker illnesses and injuries have fallen dramatically since 1993, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In fact, in 1997 (the most recent year tallied by the BLS), the case rate dropped to 7.1 percent of all workers, despite a total of 3 percent more hours worked by the nation's employees. This translates to nearly 50,000 fewer reported injuries or illnesses compared to the previous year, despite the larger number of staff-hours—the continuation of a trend that began in 1993. Still, even with fewer reported illnesses, injuries and fatalities on the job, workers suffered 2.9 million injuries that resulted in lost workdays, restricted duties or both.

Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, the construction trades in particular are quite dangerous. Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman reported recently that "injuries and illnesses for construction laborers, carpenters, and welders and cutters increased by a total of 8,000 cases." Truck drivers, too, suffer more than their share of injuries, incurring approximately 145,000 work-related injuries or illnesses each year.

For the average worker, backs take the brunt of the injuries. About 4 out of 10 injuries involve strains and sprains, most of them back-related. Women are more susceptible than men to repetitive motion illnesses from jobs such as keyboarding, data entry, cashier work and scanning. These musculoskeletal disorders, known as MSDs, include carpal-tunnel syndrome and tendinitis. Many are caused by faulty ergonomic conditions in the workplace, such as poorly placed furniture and improper counter heights, say industrial hygiene, IH, professionals, experts in occupational and environmental health and safety.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, although workplace injury is a primary focus for IH professionals, they like to point out that safety issues don't disappear in the company parking lot. This awareness gives OEHS Week its second important emphasis—safety in the community and home.

Thornton noted that in addition to its focus on workplace safety, OEHS Week is designed to heighten awareness about several vital community health concerns, including carbon monoxide poisoning, indoor air quality and noise exposure.

"Just as in the workplace, paying attention to seemingly small things can reduce injuries in the home. There are lots of things the average person can do," said Thornton. "Reducing noise

pollution and hearing loss by lowering the volume on stereos or wearing earplugs when mowing the lawn, for instance.

"We also recommend installing a couple of inexpensive carbon monoxide detectors in your home. They could save your life—and your family's lives as well."

#### NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it was 4 years ago that Nagwang Choephel, a Tibetan who studied ethnomusicology at Middlebury College in Vermont on a Fulbright Scholarship, was arrested in Tibet in 1995.

After imprisoning him incommunicado for 15 months, on December 26, 1996, Chinese officials sentenced Mr. Choephel to 18 years in prison on charges of espionage.

Four years have passed and despite high level discussions about this case between the administration and Chinese officials, resolutions passed in both the Senate and the House on Mr. Choephel's behalf, and a number of worldwide letter writing campaigns, he remains incarcerated in a remote corner of Tibet for a crime he did not commit.

The Chinese Government has never provided evidence to support their allegations that Mr. Choephel was sent by the Dalai Lama to gather intelligence and engage in separatist activities.

The State Department has no evidence that he participated in any illegal or political activity.

What is indisputable, however, is that Mr. Choephel traveled to Tibet with a donated video camera and recording equipment to document Tibetan music and dance—subjects he studied as a young man in India and as a Fulbright Scholar in Vermont.

The sixteen hours of footage that Mr. Choephel sent out of Tibet before his arrest affirm this fact. It simply shows the traditional dancing and singing that is an integral part of Tibet's rich cultural heritage.

I have spoken out many times about this tragic miscarriage of justice.

I have twice discussed my concerns with Chinese President Jiang, once in Beijing and again in Washington. I and other Members of Congress have written letter after letter to the Chinese Ambassador in Washington and other Chinese officials seeking information about Mr. Choephel's whereabouts and his well-being. I have tried to arrange meetings with Chinese authorities here, to no avail.

As we commemorate this sad anniversary, we know no more about Mr. Choephel's condition than we did 4 years ago.

His mother, who has repeatedly sought permission from the Chinese Government to visit her only child, has not given up. She continues her tireless campaign for his freedom on the streets of New Delhi.

I had hoped that Chinese authorities would have recognized by now the

grave mistake they made in sentencing Mr. Choephel. International outrage over this case mounts with each additional year he spends in jail.

Congress, the administration, and the international community must continue to do whatever it can to ensure that next year at this time we are celebrating this young man's release, and the release of the many other political prisoners who are being unfairly detained in Tibet and China.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday, September 14, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,657,645,658,855.66 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-seven billion, six hundred forty-five million, six hundred fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred fifty-five dollars and sixty-six cents).

One year ago, September 14, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,548,258,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-eight billion, two hundred fifty-eight million).

Five years ago, September 14, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,683,788,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred eighty-three billion, seven hundred eighty-eight million).

Ten years ago, September 14, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,849,710,000,000 (Two trillion, eight hundred forty-nine billion, seven hundred ten million).

Fifteen years ago, September 14, 1984, the Federal debt stood at \$1,572,267,000,000 (One trillion, five hundred seventy-two billion, two hundred sixty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$4 trillion—\$4,085,378,658,855.66 (Four trillion, eighty-five billion, three hundred seventy-eight million, six hundred fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred fifty-five dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 15 years.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:29 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1883. An act to provide for the application of measures to foreign persons who transfer to Iran certain goods, services, or technology, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Speaker appoints the following Members as additional conferees in the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the House to the bill (S. 900) to enhance competition in the financial services industry by providing a prudential framework for the affiliation of banks, securities firms, insurance companies, and other financial service providers and for other purposes; and appoints as additional conferees from the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of section 101 of

the Senate bill and section 101 of the House amendment:

Mr. KING is appointed in lieu of Mr. BACHUS.

Mr. ROYCE is appointed in lieu of Mr. CASTLE.

As additional conferees from the Committee on Commerce, for consideration of section 101 of the Senate bill and section 101 of the House amendment:

Mrs. WILSON is appointed in lieu of Mr. LARGENT.

Mr. FOSSELLA is appointed in lieu of Mr. BILBRAY.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 3 of Public Law 94-304 as amended by section 1 of Public Law 99-7, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to fill the existing vacancies thereon: Mr. PITTS of Pennsylvania, and upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader, Mr. FORBES of New York.

At 1:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House of Representative to the bill (S. 1059) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribed personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

At 5:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Berry, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2490) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-5157. A communication from the Executive Director, Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Combating Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction"; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC-5158. A communication from the Inspector General, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the budget request for fiscal year 2001; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5159. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Market Segment Specialization Program Audit Techniques Guide-Sports Franchises", received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5160. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice 99-45, 1999 Section 43 Inflation Adjustment", received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5161. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Import Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulation Concerning Preliminary Critical Circumstances Findings" (RIN0625-AA56), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5162. A communication from the President and Chairman, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a transaction involving U.S. exports to India; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5163. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Law, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "DOE Authorized Subcontract for Use by DOE Management and Operating Contractors with New Independent States' Scientific Institutes through the International Science and Technology Center" (AL 99-06), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5164. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of State Air Quality Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Delaware; Control of Emission from Existing Municipal Solid Waste Landfills" (FRL #6439-2), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5165. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Determination to Extend Deadline for Promulgation of Action on Section 126 Petition" (FRL #6437-2), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5166. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Primary Drinking Water Regulation: Consumer Confidence Report; Correction" (FRL #6437-6), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5167. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Notice of Direct Final Rule Revisions to Emissions Budgets Set Forth in EPA's Finding of Significant Contribution and Rulemaking for Purposes of Reducing Regional Transport of Ozone for the States of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island" (FRL #6437-36), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5168. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tennessee: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision" (FRL #6437-9), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5169. A communication from the Deputy Division Chief, Competitive Pricing Division, Common Carrier Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Access Charge Reform, CC Docket No. 96-262, Fifth Report and Order" (FCC 99-206) (CC Doc. 96-262 and 94-1), received September 10, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5170. A communication from the Special Assistant to the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments; FM Broadcast Stations; Cedar Key, FL" (MM Docket No. 99-72), received September 8, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5171. A communication from the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments; FM Broadcast Stations; Oraibi and Leupp, AZ (MM Docket No. 98-179), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5172. A communication from the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments; FM Broadcast Stations; Cherry Valley and Cotton Plant, AR (MM Docket No. 98-223; RM-9340; RM-9481; RM-9482), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5173. A communication from the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments; FM Broadcast Stations; Kensett, AR; Somerton, AZ; Augusta, KS; Wellton, AZ; Center, CO; LaVeta, CO; Walsenburg, CO; Taft, CA; Cimarron, KS; (MM Docket No. 99-99, RM-9484; MM Docket No. 99-100, RM-9491; MM Docket No. 99-101, RM-9494; MM Docket No. 99-102, RM-9495; MM Docket No. 99-105, RM-9508; MM Docket No. 99-107, RM-9510; MM Docket No. 99-109, RM-9512; MM Docket No. 99-111, RM-9539; MM Docket No. 99-113, RM-9544), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5174. A communication from the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.202(b), Table of Allotments; FM Broadcast Stations; LaJara, CO; Westcliffe, CO; Carmel Valley, CA; Nanakuli, HI; Wahiawa, HI; Hanapepe, HI; Hualaloa, HI; Honokaa, HI; Kihei, HI; Kurtistown, HI (MM Docket No. 99-106, RM-9509; MM Docket No. 99-110, RM-9513; MM Docket No. 99-171, RM-9574; MM Docket No. 99-172, RM-9575; MM Docket No. 99-173, RM-9576; MM Docket No. 99-175, RM-9578; MM Docket No. 99-176, RM-9579; MM Docket No. 99-177, RM-9580; MM Docket No. 99-178, RM-9581; MM Docket No. 99-179, RM-9582)", received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5175. A communication from the Chief, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to