

S. 2231, to increase Chapter 35 educational assistance benefits, and to increase funding to State Approving Agencies.

S. 2237, to enhance compensation for veterans with hearing loss.

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, May 2, 2002, at 9:30 a.m., for a hearing entitled "Gas Prices: How Are They Really Set?"

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

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that David Roll, a fellow on my staff, be granted the privilege of floor.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Shara Aranoff, a fellow with the Senate Finance Committee trade staff, during the duration of the debate on the trade bill.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Sarah Lennon, a Department of Energy fellow in Senator CARNAHAN'S office, be granted the privilege of the floor during today's session.

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

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DASCHLE. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination reported out earlier today by the Health, Education, and Labor Committee: Elias Adam Zerhouni, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health. I further ask that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, any statements be printed in the RECORD, and the Senate return to legislative session without any intervening action or debate.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Elias Adam Zerhouni, of Maryland, to be Director of the National Institutes of Health.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Dr. Elias Zerhouni on his confirmation by the U.S. Senate as the new Director of the National Institutes of Health. I am pleased that his nomination was approved by the

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee this morning and that the Senate has approved his nomination today.

I am proud that Maryland is home to the National Institutes of Health, and some of the best and brightest researchers in the world. Now Maryland is the home of the National Institutes of Health's new Director, Dr. Zerhouni.

Dr. Zerhouni has spent his impressive career turning medical research into tools and treatments that improve patients' lives. He is an innovative thinker and a successful entrepreneur who has turned his scientific discoveries into successful businesses. He is also a talented administrator who will bring his leadership skills to bear on this challenging new role. His administrative skills will be especially important as Congress completes the bipartisan commitment to double NIH's budget this year.

I am pleased that the U.S. Senate has given Dr. Zerhouni this resounding show of support as he prepares to take the helm of the world's finest research institution. I look forward to working with Dr. Zerhouni in his new role as Director of the National Institutes of Health. The National Institutes of Health and the American people will be well served by Dr. Elias Zerhouni.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today the Senate is considering the nomination of one of the nation's most distinguished scientific leaders, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, to be the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Zerhouni's life is a story about endless possibilities. He arrived from Algeria with little else but his medical training—and a desire to help his fellow human beings facing disease. From that humble beginning, he has explored the endless possibilities of medical research. His contributions have been extraordinary.

Dr. Zerhouni developed new methods for imaging living tissues that are in use in hospitals around the nation. As a skilled administrator, he has demonstrated leadership and vision time and time again at Johns Hopkins. He revitalized the Medical School's Clinical Practice Association. He worked skillfully with scientists, business leaders and elected officials to create a thriving biotechnology park.

Most recently, he established the groundbreaking Institute for Cell Engineering. At this remarkable new facility, scientists are exploring the potential of stem cells to alleviate some of the most deadly diseases we face as a nation. The stem cell research conducted at the new Institute is already providing new insights into therapies for Parkinson's Disease, spinal injury, diabetes, and other serious illnesses.

In many ways, the story of NIH is also a story about endless possibilities. NIH research has developed therapies to free millions of Americans from the limitations of disease and disability so that they, too, can explore the endless possibilities of an active and productive life.

Dr. Zerhouni will become the first NIH Director in this new century of the life sciences. Never have the possibilities for NIH been greater. The NIH budget will increase to more than \$27 billion this year. Those funds will support research and training in thousands of research institutions across the nation and around the world. Leading the NIH is an awesome responsibility that will determine the quality of life for millions and millions of Americans for many years to come.

NIH research ranges from studies of microscopic structures in living cells to investigations of patterns of disease in entire populations. NIH research not only gives us information about what keeps us healthy or makes us sick, but it reveals new insights into who we are as human beings.

The advances made by NIH research in just the first two years of this new century are extraordinary—and the future promises still greater wonders. Already in this century, NIH research has helped map the human genome. No less important than these basic genetic studies are recent findings from NIH scientists that structured lifestyle changes can significantly reduce the risk of diabetics, sparing millions of Americans from this deadly disease.

The impact of NIH research on human health is incalculable. Life expectancies have risen dramatically over the last century, and some scientists believe that the first human being to live to be a productive 150 year-old is already alive today.

Never before have the challenges for NIH been greater. The anthrax attacks of last fall taught the nation what many of us knew already—that the powerful techniques of modern biology can be used not only to heal but to harm. Just this week, the Brookings Institute published a risk assessment showing that a million Americans could die in a major biological attack.

NIH must provide the leadership required to develop new medical weapons in the battle against bioterrorism. I know that good progress is already being made in the race to develop better vaccines against smallpox, anthrax, and other dangerous pathogens.

I would also like to extend my thanks, and the thanks of the entire Senate to Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, who has served so effectively as Acting Director since the departure of Dr. Harold Varmus. She has served in this important position with dedication and skill, to the great benefit of NIH and the nation.

Earlier this week, our committee received Dr. Zerhouni's nomination papers from the President. A few days ago, we listened to him explain his vision for meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities of this new century of the life sciences as NIH Director. Earlier today, our committee approved his nomination unanimously. I hope my Senate colleagues will confirm his nomination quickly. I wish every good future to Dr. Zerhouni, and