

professional and as dedicated as any that has ever worn the uniform of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, as an Oregonian and as an American, I am proud to call them my countrymen. I know my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in extending their gratitude to the men and women of the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry—the Guardians of the Western Gate.

May God bless them, and may God bless America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, on April 25, 2002, I had to return home due to my son's sudden illness and I was not present to cast my vote for HR 3231, the Barbara Jordan Immigration Reform and Accountability Act, and its amendments. Had I been present I would have voted:

YES on roll call 111.

YES on roll call 112.

YES on roll call 113.

NO, on roll call 114, the Issa amendment.

NO, on roll call 115, the Lofgren amendment, and

YES, on roll call vote 116 for final passage.

INTRODUCTION OF "WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT AND DIGITAL DIVIDENDS ACT"

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Wireless Technology Investment and Digital Dividends Act." I am proposing this measure in order to advance three key goals: (1) to create a permanent public interest telecommunications trust fund; (2) to establish a "Spectrum Commons"; and (3) to recapture wireless policymaking from unrelated budgetary initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the public deserves to reap the benefits of the sale of licenses to its airwaves, not only in the offering of new commercial services or the temporary infusion of cash into the Federal treasury. The public should also enjoy the "dividends" that can be reaped by reinvesting money raised through use of a public asset in a manner designed to promote educational technology projects, educational software R&D, as well as initiatives addressing the digital divide.

The bill I am introducing today creates a permanent trust fund (the "Digital Dividends Trust Fund") from wireless auction revenue to fund such public interest telecommunications initiatives. Splitting the grants into two general categories—"human capital telecommunications investments" and "broadband infrastructure investments for public access and rural development" the Digital Dividends Trust Fund authorizes grants for the following initiatives: Training of teachers & other personnel at schools and libraries eligible for E-rate funding; R&D for cutting-edge educational software

designed to enhance learning in schools; Digitizing educational materials held in our nation's libraries, archives, and museums; Technology projects supported by volunteers enrolled in AmeriCorps; Projects enhancing the access of individuals with disabilities to advanced telecommunications services; Retraining workers and unemployed individuals with skills applicable to the new economy; After-school programs for youth focused on computer literacy and interaction; Local and regional programs to expand access to advanced telecommunications in areas available to the general public; Broadband deployment to low-income housing and community centers and to unserved rural areas; and, Conversion of public radio and television broadcasting stations to digital broadcasting technology.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the legislation I introduce today establishes a "Spectrum Commons." High tech manufacturers, entrepreneurs and the proverbial 'kid in the garage' could make more robust use of wireless communications if sufficient spectrum were available in unlicensed form for the general public. The bill requires the FCC to establish a 20 MHz band of contiguous frequencies below 2 GHz as well as between 3 to 500 MHz between 2 GHz and 6 GHz—a swath of the airwaves that would remain open to the public and unlicensed. Such a public set-aside could foster the formation of an open platform for innovation, entrepreneurial activity, and public communications. It would also militate against unhealthy consolidation of spectrum in the hands of too few providers.

An unlicensed area of the airwaves will permit the public, through the use of 'smart' radio technology and better receiver equipment, to harness the airwaves for countless applications if the government is willing to give back to the public a portion of its own airwaves in such an unlicensed format. From "wi-fi" technology and low power "Bluetooth" wireless connections, to so-called "802.11b" protocols, wireless local area networks and Net connections, utilization of publicly available airwaves can help connect people and businesses in cost-effective and spectrum efficient ways. The "Spectrum Commons" will also help to propel economic growth and innovation by opening up the airwaves to new marketplace entry by individuals and entities unaffiliated with established network providers.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is important that telecommunications policymaking reassert itself in wireless policy, where for too long budget priorities have warped sound policy. Since Congress first enacted legislation in 1993 to permit the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to distribute certain airwave licenses to the public through the use of auctions, the FCC has used this licensing mechanism numerous times and the U.S. Government has reaped billions of dollars for general revenue purposes. The initial principle behind auctions was to enhance telecommunications policy goals through the efficient licensing of frequency spectrum, where the revenue an auction raised represented an additional beneficial dividend to the taxpayer.

Over time, however, the use of auctions has become perverted. They are increasingly advocated primarily for purposes of raising general revenue irrespective of whether such auctions advance sound telecommunications policy. Moreover, the money raised from auctions has been sent directly to the U.S. Treasury.

The money from telecommunications auctions was not reinvested in order to enhance our democracy, bridge the digital divide, or promote public interest telecommunications projects. Instead, the auction of licenses for use of the public's airwaves has been subjected to the alchemy of budget scorers intent on transforming thin air into gold.

Legitimate telecommunications policy objectives are often undermined by proposals to auction certain slices of the airwaves on a date dictated by budgetary scoring needs. Instead, auctions should only be scheduled once the appropriate telecommunications policy goals have been agreed upon and the conditions necessary for successful licensing through auctions have been secured.

This legislation requires the FCC, prior to scheduling upcoming auctions, to take action to achieve the timely transition to digital television by establishing rules governing must-carry issues, minimum programming and broadcasting requirements, and digital television receiver benchmarks. It also directs the NTIA and the FCC to take action to secure additional spectrum for advanced wireless services—including mobile services such as so-called "3G" services. Sound telecommunications policy, consistent with the public interest, would be greatly furthered by putting the "policy horse" back in front of the "auction cart." The bill re-establishes this principle in wireless policy.

REMARKS FOR THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN WASHINGTON

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 2, 2002

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, what a privilege it is to be with you today. I am especially pleased that my wife is here! She got up early and left North Carolina at 5:00 a.m. to surprise me. [applause] Yes, lets give her a hand! And I appreciate my staff being here! In just a little while—back in my hometown of Lumberton, North Carolina—scores of people will be gathering around the Robeson County Courthouse to pray for us here in Washington—and for our nation and our world. Ten years ago I was part of a local family commission that began our observance of the National Day of Prayer back home, and it has been exciting to see the ever-increasing number of people who gather to pray on this day—both locally and nationally.

Why should we pray? Why is prayer important? Think about it! How many times have we prayed really expecting on answer? Prayer is important because it emphasizes God's peace, God's power, God's purpose. Peace, power and purpose.

First, we know God's peace through prayer. Luke 18:1 is a parable to show that all times we ought to pray and not lose heart. So often we consume ourselves with fear rather than with faith. We forget that prayer should be the first resort, not the last resort! Too often we buy the lie that the world has taught us: "Well, I guess there's nothing left to do but pray about it!" We ought to talk to God first, because He already knows the outcome, and He can handle it! So often we rob ourselves of peace because we forget that God is bigger