

BUS SAFETY

Mr. CLELAND. Madam President, I rise today to address two timely issues.

It is with a heavy heart over the loss of two passengers on a Greyhound bus last night in California and the injury of several others that I turn the attention of the Senate to bus security. This tragedy occurred when a passenger attacked the driver of the bus. After a heroic struggle upon being stabbed in the neck, the driver lost control of the bus. That is when the bus careened off Interstate 5. The alleged attacker was subsequently arrested by the police.

While terrorism is not suspected as the cause of the attack, no one knows what would have happened had the attacker gained control of the bus. Also, this attack occurs almost exactly 1 year after the October 3, 2001, Greyhound attack in Tennessee that left 7 dead.

However, we have seen the all-too-often result of buses used to commit terror attacks in the Middle East where suicide bombers have used buses to carry out their deadly work. Historically, between 1920 and 2000, about half of the terrorist acts in the world occurred against buses or bus companies. With intercity buses serving almost 800 million passengers annually in over 4,000 communities, I believe Congress must act to protect our travelers from being subject to the same terror and safety concerns.

Last November, I introduced S. 1739 to authorize a 2-year grant program to improve the safety and security of buses. Funding could be used for safety improvements inside the terminals and on buses—for equipment such as metal detectors, database programs for sharing passenger lists, communication technology, cameras, and more. My legislation passed the Commerce Committee earlier this year without opposition, but unfortunately, it has been stalled waiting for floor action. I urge my colleagues to clear this bill for passage by the full Senate today. We owe it to the families of those who have been touched by this tragedy, and we owe it to the millions of passengers embarking on a trip or tour via bus service.

Also, the House companion legislation, H.R. 3429, has passed the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and is pending on the House floor. It has strong bipartisan support, including its sponsor Committee Chairmen DON YOUNG.

Congress has already expressed its approval for funding of such security measures in the 2002 supplemental appropriations bill by providing \$15 million for bus security. My legislation authorizes the program at more adequate levels and provides much-needed congressional commitment for implementation of the program. Intercity bus passengers—our fellow citizens—should feel secure and safe, and Congress should not stand in the way.

Additionally, I would like to ask my colleagues to examine the issue of ac-

cess to technology, which is also important to protecting the security of our people. Over 7 months ago the Commerce committee held a hearing on the so-called digital divide at our colleges and universities that serve the largest concentrations of the Nation's minority students. We heard compelling testimony that a significant technology gap exists for a majority of these students at a time when the world economy is becoming increasingly technology driven. Only one tribal college has funding for a broadband connection, and it is not yet in place. At private historically black colleges and universities, 75 percent of their servers and printers are obsolete or nearly obsolete and in need of replacement. Half of the HBCUs surveyed in a landmark study 2 years ago by the Department of Commerce did not have computers available in the location most accessible to students—their dormitories. Hispanic students are almost 20 percent less likely than non-Hispanic whites to have a home computer and almost 25 percent less likely to use the Internet at home.

Currently there is no Federal program that provides funds to minority-serving colleges and universities for computer hardware and software acquisition. S. 414, the NTIA Digital Technology Program Act, would provide this critically needed resource for America's under-represented and educationally disadvantaged minorities in higher education. It has been lauded as the most significant tool for addressing the infrastructure and instrumentation needs of the Nation's minority-serving institutions since the reauthorization of title III of the Higher Education Act. It is a bipartisan bill sponsored by 18 Senators from both sides of the aisle. The bill was reported unanimously by the Senate Commerce Committee in May and also enjoys bipartisan cosponsorship and support in the House of Representatives.

In the ever-expanding world of the information highway, it should be our mandate to work to ensure that no one in this country is left behind—least of all our leaders of tomorrow.

 UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 414

Mr. CLELAND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 487, S. 414; that the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I object on behalf of Members on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

 UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1739

Mr. CLELAND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 544, S. 1739; that the Cleland amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I object on behalf of Members on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CLELAND. Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

 HIGH COST OF HEALTH
INSURANCE

Mr. BOND. Madam President, there is another matter that is extremely important for small businesses in this country; that is, the high cost of health insurance.

I have, along with my colleague, Senator HUTCHINSON from Arkansas, introduced a measure to authorize association of health plans so small businesses can come together in trade associations or other multistate bodies with similar interests to purchase their health insurance with a large pool.

If you purchase as an individual or as a very small business, it is like going into the store and buying soda one can at a time. You can't get a very good price. It also costs you a lot more in administrative costs to administer that plan if you are the sole administrator. From the health insurance standpoint, you don't share the risks over a broad group of people so that you can make an actuarially sound determination of how much health insurance costs.

We have seen health insurance costs rising all across the Nation.

Early last month, I hosted my second National Conference for Women and Small Business Owners in St. Louis. And not surprisingly, some 72 percent of them said providing health insurance, which is extremely costly, was one of the most important challenges they face.

We also found another statistic that I found very amazing. We have 39 or 40 million people without health insurance in the country today. That is far too many. But did you know that 60 percent—roughly 24 million of those