

Microsoft, Cisco, Hewlett Packard, Dell, Intel, Corning, Motorola, and NCR have weighed in, saying it is critically important for the United States to adopt a national broadband policy that encourages investment in new broadband infrastructure, applications, and services.

Broadband deployment should be a national priority in the 21st century. In order to be competitive, educate our workforce, and increase productivity, the United States must have universal broadband. Millions of Americans in rural areas and inner cities are impeded in accessing the full range of services available from the Internet because they do not have access to broadband service. We should strive to connect all Americans to the Internet through broadband technology. I will work with my colleagues to find a way to accomplish this goal in a fair manner that supports broadband deployment throughout all of our Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

• Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, every year the Congress designates the September 15–October 15 period as Hispanic Heritage Month, but even as we do so we know that the contributions Hispanic Americans make to our national life are much greater than the modest tribute we pay them. Of all the varied cultures and traditions that are woven together into the distinctive fabric of American life, Hispanic Americans have some of the most distinctive, vigorous, and sustained culture and traditions.

In recent years the Hispanic American population in the United States has grown very rapidly. According to the 2000 census it stands at 35 million, which represents an increase of 58 percent in the previous decade alone. Projections show that by mid-century Hispanic Americans will make up 24 percent of the population; put another way, just about one in every four Americans will be of Hispanic-American origin. We have seen this trend very clearly in my own State of Maryland, where the Hispanic American population has grown more than 82 percent since 1990, and now makes up more than 4 percent of the population statewide. But numbers and percentages, while impressive, only hint at the vigor and the variety of the Hispanic contribution to Maryland's culture and economy.

Just as the U.S. population is diverse, so is the Hispanic American community itself. There have long been established Puerto Rican and Dominican communities in New York City, Central American communities in the Washington metropolitan area, Cuban Americans in Florida, Mexican Americans in California and the Southwest; but Hispanics from many different countries now live in cities and

towns and villages in every corner of the Nation, and they bring to the communities in which they settle the rich cultures of the nations from which they have come. They are moving forward to take their place in community and political institutions at every level. They are changing the face of America, and changing the way we see America. As Hispanic Americans participate increasingly in every aspect of our national life grows, they bring a new dimension to ethnic diversity; with their presence they challenge the old, corrosive assumptions that divided the world into black and white.

We must see to it that Hispanic Americans, like all other Americans, have access to all the opportunities that make our society stronger, opportunities for education, employment, health care and housing. We must also see that language barriers do not create unnecessary and unproductive impediments to participation. Sensitivity to cultural differences is important in our schools and clinics, our financial institutions, government offices and courts; appropriate bilingual materials can often solve problems of communication. Hispanic Americans have given much to our national life, and with adequate opportunities they will give much more.

Succeeding generations of immigrants have come to this country in search of a better life. They have worked hard, often against the most difficult odds, to make a place for themselves and their families, and to realize fully the promise this Nation offers. Diversity has always been the hallmark of the Republic; the attacks of September 11 a year ago have brought home to us, perhaps more so than ever in the past, that in the diversity of our people lies one of our greatest strengths. Hispanic Americans are now helping to write an important new chapter in our history, and I am pleased and proud to offer this tribute to Hispanic Heritage Month, which recognizes and celebrates their accomplishments.●

HONORING FRED ABRAHAM

• Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate and honor an outstanding Ohioan, Fred Abraham, on his upcoming retirement. Fred is retiring from Ducks Unlimited, DU, where he has become widely recognized as the expert on wetlands restoration and protection. During his time at Ducks Unlimited, he has been an incredibly valuable resource to my staff and to me. We have relied on him for accurate information and clear advice on countless occasions.

Fred has dedicated more than three decades of his life to the preservation and restoration of wetlands. Through his work at Ducks Unlimited, Fred has advocated on behalf of wetlands across the country, working on projects in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and California. Today, thanks to Fred's tireless ef-

forts, America's wetlands are in great shape and have ample resources.

Fred was born in Canton, OH, and served time in the Air Force during the Korean War. He then returned to Ohio, where he worked in the steel mills and began a career marketing baked goods. His passion for conservation grew as he started organizing sportsmen's clubs throughout Ohio to voice their concerns on wildlife and conservation issues. Fred was one of the early advocates of fostering industrial responsibility as acid-mine runoff and other pollutants threatened wildlife and their habitat.

He developed such a talent for conservation advocacy that he was recruited by the Ohio Division of Wildlife and took a position as a District Supervisor. While there, he helped resolve many of the challenging habitat and conservation issues facing Ohio in the 1970s and 1980s, and solidified his status as a leader on wetland and wildlife issues.

Fred then went on to work for one of the most influential conservation organizations in the country, Ducks Unlimited. At DU, he built strong coalitions and made countless friends, advocating on behalf of sportsmen at the national level. After 16 years at DU, where he engaged in fundraising and grassroots advocacy, Fred came to Washington as DU's Director of Conservation Policy.

Fred was the force behind some of the most important conservation legislation that has been signed into law. His accomplishments on behalf of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Wetlands Reserve Program, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act have had a profound effect on wetlands, waterfowl, and wildlife across the country. Under his leadership and advocacy, the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund has increased dramatically, rising to \$43,500,000 in 2002.

I first met Fred several years ago on a trip to the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Metzger March in Northwest Ohio. I immediately could sense his passion for wetlands and his motivation to preserve these areas for us now and for generations in the future. There is no question that Fred Abraham is "the Man" when it comes to wetlands. Both in Washington and around the country, he is widely recognized as the foremost advocate on wetland restoration.

Everyone who has had the opportunity to work with Fred is proud to call him a friend. We admire his energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the conservation cause. I am sure that he will spend his retirement enjoying some of the wetlands areas he has helped preserve, and I am confident that we will still hear his voice on many conservation issues. I ask my colleagues in the Senate to join me in congratulating Fred Abraham on his retirement and wish him the best of luck in the future.●