

I will never forget meeting another gentleman who has become my dear friend, Les Skramstad. Les watched me closely all evening. He was wary and approached me after his friends and neighbors had finished speaking. He said to me, Senator, a lot of people have come to Libby and told us they would help, then they leave and we never hear from them again.

"Max," he said, "please, as a man like me—as someone's father too, as someone's husband, as someone's son, help me. Help us. Help us make this town safe for Libby's sons and daughters not even born yet. They should not suffer my fate too. I was a miner and breathed that dust in. And what happened to me and all the other men who mined wasn't right—but what has happened to the others is a sin.

"Every day, I carried that deadly dust home on my clothes. I took it into our house, and I contaminated my own wife and each of my babies with it, too. Just like me, they are sick, and we will each die the same way. I just don't know how to live with the pain of what I have done to them. If we can make something good come of this, maybe I'll stick around to see that, maybe that could make this worthwhile.

"Find someone to use me, to study me, to learn something about this dust that is still in my lungs right now." I told him I would do all that I could and that I wouldn't back down and that I wouldn't give up. Les accepted my offer and then pointed his finger and said to me, "I'll be watching Senator."

Les is my inspiration. He is the face of hundreds and thousands of sick and exposed folks in this tiny Montana community. When I get tired, I think of Les, and I can't shake what he asked me to do. In all of my years as an elected official, this issue of doing what is right for Libby is among the most personally compelling things I have ever been called on to do.

Doing what is right for the community and making something good come of it, is my mission in Libby, and I thank Les Skramstad every day for handing me out my marching orders. My staff and I have worked tirelessly in Libby—not for thanks or recognition but because the tragedy is just that gripping.

The "something good," Les challenged me to deliver keeps our eye on the ball. I secured the first dollars from HHS 3 years ago to establish the Clinic for Asbestos Related to Disease, to allow the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to begin the necessary screening of folks who had been exposed to Libby's asbestos. Federal dollars have flowed to Libby for cleanup, healthcare, and revitalizing the economy.

Last Congress, I was pleased to introduce the Libby Health Care Act, to secure longterm health funding for sick people in Libby, and I will introduce similar legislation this year. We seek ongoing funding for asbestos patient care and continue to closely monitor

and support asbestos cleanup efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency.

At the first field hearing I held in Libby of the Committee for Environment and Public Works, Dr. Blad Black, now the director of the Libby Clinic for Asbestos Related Disease, called for developing a research facility so that Libby's tragedy could be used to protect the health of men, women, and children.

The wheels are on the cleanup and health screening, and the time for making Brad's vision a reality is here. Working together with Montana Congressional delegation and our State's Governor to develop a leading edge, world class research facility with the mission of one day developing cures for asbestos-related disease is exactly what Les called for that evening more than 3 years ago as well. He and the hundreds and thousands who suffer like Les and his family have my commitment.

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator GRAHAM, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from Senator GRAHAM to Senator FRIST and myself be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, January 31, 2003.

Hon. BILL FRIST,

U.S. Senate,

Washington, DC.

Hon. TOM DASCHLE,

U.S. Senate,

Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR FRIST AND SENATOR DASCHLE: The purpose of this letter is to share with you and my colleagues a development regarding my health.

This morning at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, I underwent successful surgery to replace the aortic valve in my heart. My doctors advised me to have this procedure now to correct a deteriorating condition that could have led to permanent damage of my heart muscle.

Accordingly, under Senate Rule VI(2), I will be necessarily absent from the floor and committee activities until my doctors clear me for a return to work. I ask that this letter be inserted in the Congressional Record of this date to explain my absence.

Given the overall excellent state of my health, the doctors tell me that I should have renewed vigor and energy following a short hospitalization and recovery period.

With the extremely competent medical care I am receiving, as well as the loving support of my wife Adele and our family, I am confident that my absence will be brief. I look forward to rejoining you in the very near future to resume work on the agenda that is so important to my state of Florida, our nation and the world.

Thank you for your good wishes, your understanding and your support.

With kind regards,
Sincerely,

BOB GRAHAM,
U.S. Senator.

REMEMBERING ASTRONAUT WILLIAM MCCOOL

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to extend my deepest condolences to the families of the seven astronauts whose lives were lost on February 1. To Nevadans Audrey and Barry McCool, whose son William piloted the final *Columbia* mission, I offer my sympathy and the sincere gratitude of an entire nation.

You raised an incredible human being. William McCool represented the best and the brightest of this country. Though his life was taken prematurely, his legacy will be felt indefinitely.

William was incredibly smart, a talented athlete, and a true patriot. The combination of these traits, along with devoted parents and religious conviction, produced an American hero. We mourn that hero today, as Audrey and Barry McCool mourn their son. And while we stand with them in grief, we should also express our admiration for the type of son they raised.

Many children dream of one day becoming an astronaut. A very elite few ever make that dream a reality. For William McCool, his dream was his destiny. As a child, he looked up to his Marine and Navy pilot father, built model airplanes, and became an Eagle Scout. As a young man, he excelled by graduating second in his class at the Naval Academy, maintaining a 4.0 grade point average, and earning advanced degrees in computer science and aeronautical engineering. Not applying to be an astronaut until his thirties, by the time of his last mission William had logged more than 2,800 hours of flight experience in 24 aircraft, including more than 400 landings on aircraft-carrier decks.

As a pilot, William McCool risked his life often for this country. On January 16, he left his wife, sons, parents, and siblings grounded on Earth while he soared toward his lifetime dream among the stars. William was kept from completing his journey home, but our gratitude for his service must not be short lived.

We must ensure that these 7 astronauts, and the 10 other NASA astronauts who died in pursuit of knowledge, did not do so in vain. We owe it to their children to continue the quest of space science, and we owe it to all our children to continue reaching for the stars.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my disappointment and dismay that the Secretary of Agriculture has failed to meet the deadline mandated by Congress to establish a program of Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers.

In the Trade Act of 2002, Congress directed the Secretary to get this program running by no later than this week, February 3, 2003.

It is running? No. Is it even close to running? No.

In fact, the Department of Agriculture tells me that their anticipated startup date is still another six months away. Meanwhile, the \$90 million that Congress set aside for this program in fiscal year 2003 has no way of reaching its intended beneficiaries. This is simply unacceptable.

Senators GRASSLEY and CONRAD recently joined me in a letter making this very point to secretary Veneman. We told her then—and I repeat it now—that we hold her personally accountable for dropping the ball on TAA for Farmers. Frankly, I expected better.

The Trade Act of 2002 renewed the President's trade promotion authority after a lapse of 8 years. In exchange for Congress', and the Nation's, renewed commitment to trade liberalization, the President agreed to expand the trade adjustment assistance program to better meet the needs of those who might be negatively impacted by trade.

A critical part of the President's commitment was the creation of a trade adjustment assistance program for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers.

We all know that opening foreign markets to American agricultural products can provide great advantages to U.S. farmers and ranchers. Already, nearly one-fifth of Montana's agricultural production is exported. For Montana wheat, a full two-thirds is exported. And opening foreign markets is the best way to create new opportunities for our farmers and ranchers.

This is one reason I have always been a strong supporter of trade liberalization and an equally strong advocate for a level playing field for our farmers in world markets.

But trade liberalization can have a downside as well. It can leave our farmers and ranchers more vulnerable to sudden import surges, devastating commodity price swings, and other countries' unfair trading practices. That is why they need this TAA program.

The Department of Labor's TAA program for workers has nominally covered family farmers, ranchers, and fishermen all along. But hardly any have participated. They usually can't qualify because they don't become unemployed in the traditional sense.

After decades of trying without success to squeeze farmers into eligibility rules designed for manufacturing workers, it was time to try something new, something that would help farmers adjust to import competition before they lost their farms.

What the Trade Act does is create a TAA program tailored to the needs of farmers, ranchers, and fishermen. Basically, the program creates a new trigger for eligibility. Instead of having to show a layoff, the farmer, rancher, or fisherman has to show commodity price declines related to imports.

The trigger is different, but the program serves the same purpose as all

our trade adjustment programs. It assists the farmer, rancher, or fisherman to adjust to import competition, to retrain, to obtain technical assistance, and to have access to income support to tide them over during the process. And the income support is capped to make sure that the program is not being abused.

So last summer the President made a commitment—to the Congress and to the American agricultural community—to make this program a reality. I think it is fair to say that this was one of just a few key elements that got the President those critical few votes he needed to pass TPA in the House and the pass it with a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate.

And now I say to the President, and to Secretary Veneman: the farmers and ranchers of Montana—and indeed throughout America—continue to wait for your administration to fulfill this commitment.

I hope this will happen sooner, rather than later.

Indeed, there is absolutely no excuse for a 6-month delay in getting this program off the ground. There certainly wasn't a 6-month delay in launching negotiations for four new free-trade agreements under TPA. There shouldn't be a delay here either.

My staff and I stand ready to assist in any way we can to kick start this process. But Secretary Veneman needs to do the heavy lifting here. And that is my challenge to her today.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, each year I come to the floor during the month of February to celebrate Black History Month and to discuss many of the contributions made by Black Americans to my home State of Oregon. Today, at the beginning of this year's celebration of Black History Month, I would like to begin another series of floor statements with a short discussion of a significant event in Oregon's history, the Vanport flood.

In 1929, Dr. DeNorval Unthank moved to Portland, OR from Pennsylvania, becoming one of the city's first black physicians. When he moved into a segregated, nearly all-White neighborhood, he and his family were greeted by rocks thrown through the windows of his home. When he replaced those windows, more rocks were thrown. Phone calls threatening his family were also common. Ultimately, Dr. Unthank was forced to move to another part of town.

The city of Portland was highly segregated in its early history, and, although experiences like Dr. Unthank's were not uncommon, there were very few Black Portlanders. World War II changed all that. Between 1941 and 1943, the African-American population in Portland increased tenfold, from roughly 2,000 to over 20,000. People came from all over the country to work in Portland's shipyards, and to accommodate this influx of labor, the city of

Vanport—a combination of the names Vancouver and Portland—was built. At the time, it was the largest public housing project in the Nation, and it became home to thousands of Black Oregonians.

Due to the housing shortage in Portland after the war, the temporary housing at Vanport was allowed to linger on long past its original intended purpose. Restrictive policies of the local real estate industry, as well as the hostility to be found in Portland's White neighborhoods, kept Black residents largely confined to Vanport. On Memorial Day 1948, the Columbia River overflowed its banks and washed away Vanport City, leaving behind a large lake and thousands of homeless people. White residents of Vanport could be fairly easily absorbed into the larger fabric of the White community with minimal disruption; however, the response to the plight of Vanport's Black residents presented a dramatic challenge to the previous patterns of racial thought and action in the city.

According to Dr. Darrell Millner, professor at Portland State University, Portland generally rose to meet the challenge of the flood in a display of admirable humanitarianism. While some distinctions related to color were made in the aftermath of the disaster, other new interracial dynamics emerged from the event that, in the long term, helped change the course of Portland race relations.

H.J. Belton Hamilton, a former chair of the Urban League of Portland's board, recalls, "A lot of people got to know each other then." Many White families took displaced Vanport Blacks into their homes after the flood, and the old artificial boundaries of the African-American community were stretched to accommodate the relocation of residents. "The Vanport flood had a major impact on Portland," said Bobbie Nunn, and early activist in the NAACP and Urban League. The city of Portland had to accommodate its Black citizens, and the movement for positive racial change was on the rise.

We can see the changes in Portland by looking back again on the life of Dr. Unthank. Not only did Dr. Unthank cofound the Urban League of Portland, but by 1958, the Oregon State Medical Society named him Doctor of the Year. Four years later, he was named Citizen of the Year by the Portland Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In 1969, DeNorval Unthank Park was dedicated in Portland. Forty years before, rocks had been thrown through the windows of his Portland home.

Portland and the entire State of Oregon went through as many changes in the middle part of the 20th century as did most other parts of our country. In the case of Portland, it was a major catastrophe, the Vanport flood, that served as one of the major catalysts for positive change. During Black History Month, I think it is important that we remember the people and events, like