

thousands of homes, took many lives, and burned hundreds of thousands of acres of grasslands and forests, exceeding the devastation of any fires in the past century;

Whereas in the space of a few days, all of the resources of local firefighting companies were called on to man fire lines, first on 1 front and then on many fronts;

Whereas firefighters were thrown into extraordinarily dangerous situations because of the fast-moving, fuel- and wind-driven fires;

Whereas firefighters exhibited resilience and courage by continuing to stay on the lines, often in back-to-back shifts, while knowing, in some instances, that their own families were in danger or that their personal homes had been lost;

Whereas 1 firefighter, Steven Rucker, made the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life;

Whereas the firefighters who were called initially were later assisted by skilled and courageous pilots, who flew water-drop flights in the most challenging wind and smoke conditions, and by firefighters from throughout the State of California and neighboring States;

Whereas additional emergency personnel, including law enforcement and medical personnel, have coordinated with local authorities and firefighters and have performed beyond the call of duty in the preservation and protection of human lives; and

Whereas members of the Armed Forces have once again met their country's call to duty, providing valuable firefighting assets and assistance to the emergency response efforts of California: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and honors all of the firefighters who responded to the devastating outbreak of wildfires in southern California in October 2003;

(2) recognizes and honors all others, including emergency, law enforcement, and medical personnel, pilots, and members of the Armed Forces, for their important contributions to controlling the wildfires and keeping Californians safe; and

(3) commends the firefighters and other personnel for dedicated service to the people of California.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MILITARY RETIREMENT EQUITY ACT OF 2003

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Governmental Affairs be dis-

charged from further consideration of H.R. 3054 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3054) to amend the Policemen and Firemen's Retirement and Disability Act to permit military service previously performed by members and former members of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, the Fire Department of the District of Columbia, the United States Park Police, and the United States Secret Service to count as creditable service for purposes of calculating retirement annuities payable to such members upon payment of a contribution by such members, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 3054) was read the third time and passed.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2003

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 12. I further ask that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then resume consideration of the VA-HUD appropriations bill, as under the previous order.

I further ask consent that the senior Senator from West Virginia be recognized at noon for up to 30 minutes; provided further that the majority leader be recognized at 6 p.m.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. FRIST. Tomorrow morning, the Senate will begin consideration of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. This will be the last of the appropriations bills brought individually to the floor. We expect to have amendments offered in the morning and therefore rollcall votes are anticipated tomorrow morning. It is my hope that we can finish that bill during Wednesday's session.

As previously announced, the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 for the Democratic Party luncheon. Following that recess, there will be 20 minutes remaining for debate before the vote on adoption of the Department of Defense authorization conference report. Immediately following that vote, the Senate will vote on the adoption of the Military Construction appropriations conference report.

Tomorrow evening it is my intent to focus the Senate's attention on several judicial nominations. This debate will go forward. I do encourage all Members to participate. This will be an opportunity for all Members to express themselves with respect to these highly qualified nominees. I hope that if Senators have reservations on any of these judicial nominations they would be present for this important debate.

I have stated repeatedly on the floor that we need to give these nominations a very straightforward up-or-down vote. I will have more to say on the plans for tomorrow night tomorrow but I do want to announce that this important debate will begin tomorrow evening.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 9:03 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, November 12, 2003, at 9:30 a.m.