

that were promised in that bill. To now make changes to the farm bill by enacting steep cuts to commodity and conservation programs undermines our family farmers and ranchers and demonstrates the administration's lack of commitment to rural economic development.

This conference report also contains \$12.7 billion in cuts to the federal student loan program. Unfortunately, this marks the largest cut to student financial aid programs in history. While the legislation does contain funding for the creation of the new Academic Competitiveness Grants and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants, National SMART Grants, the Senate-passed budget reconciliation legislation contained more than \$8 billion in new need-based assistance to supplement Pell Grants.

The Academic Competitiveness Grants Program would limit aid to a small subset of financially eligible students that completed a rigorous secondary school program to be defined by the Secretary of Education. I support students taking a rigorous high school curriculum, but this would be the first time the Federal Government links need-based financial aid to the academic curriculum available to a student.

The National SMART Grants Program would limit aid to only those students choosing to major in math, science, technology, engineering, computer science, or high-need foreign language. While we all want more students to study math and sciences, we also need to find additional need-based aid for students that choose other important academic fields.

Finally, this will be the fourth year in a row that Congress has failed to increase the maximum Pell Grant award from \$4,050.

The Republican leadership has argued that these cuts are a necessary step toward restoring fiscal discipline. However, when these cuts are paired with the tax reconciliation bill, they will actually cause an increase in the national debt. Leaders in Congress have made it clear that after the completion of the omnibus spending bill, Congress will consider the extension of investment tax breaks geared disproportionately toward the super rich with incomes in excess of \$200,000 annually. Correspondingly, the estimated cost from these tax cuts to the Treasury and the American public far outweigh the savings forecast from the omnibus spending bill. A key intent of the reconciliation process is to reign in the governmental spending or to move through the Congress changes to mandatory domestic programs.

The majority intends to pervert this process by using the omnibus spending bill as a device to free up room in the budget for costly tax cuts primarily geared toward the wealthiest two percent of taxpayers. The end result is that future generations will be saddled with higher borrowing costs and lower

economic growth in order to pay off the national debt charges run up by the fiscally irresponsible tax cuts pushed by this Congress. This vote is not for fiscal discipline and reduced deficits. Instead, those pushing through today's spending cut bill are doing so to make room for further tax cuts and billions more to the national debt.

Mr. President, I recognize we must get our fiscal house in order. However, I do not believe that budget cuts should come at the expense of ordinary people and struggling family farmers when huge agribusinesses continue to reap millions without effective payment caps in place, and tax cuts for multimillionaires are being preserved. The priorities set forth in this conference report are wrong; I will vote against the conference report and urge my colleagues to do the same.

COLONEL NORM VAUGHAN

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I rise in tribute to COL Norm Vaughan who accompanied ADM Richard Byrd to Antarctica. He celebrates his 100th birthday today. The Anchorage Daily News has printed an article by Carol Phillips talking about Vaughan as a great man and good friend. I ask unanimous consent to print the article in the RECORD.

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

[From the Anchorage Daily News, Dec. 19, 2005]

VAUGHAN IS A GREAT MAN, GOOD FRIEND
(By Carol A. Phillips)

On a February day in 1964, I hurried down to the main street of my little town where the annual sled dog race was about to start. Excited about this sporting event that had always intrigued me, I lingered near the starting line as the racers made last-minute preparations and the dogs leaped and yelped their impatience to hit the trail.

Suddenly I heard a voice in an accent that was music to my ears—a Bostonian here in Interior Alaska. Having emigrated recently from Maine, I was compelled to trace the source of that unmistakable accent. That was the day I met Col. Norman Vaughan, then a young 58, who was working as a handler for a New Hampshire racer. That meeting was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

The achievements of Vaughan's extraordinary career are familiar to his legion of friends. He returned in the mid-1970s to make his home here and became such a legend in his own time that it's hard to realize he has not always been an Alaskan.

His adventures and accomplishments are diverse. He played an essential role as dog handler on the 1927 Byrd Antarctic expedition; served with distinction in the military; airlifted supplies to Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's Labrador mission; coordinated the rescue of 25 airmen stranded on the Greenland icecap; retrieved the top-secret Norden bombsight so critical to the United States during World War II; ran in several Iditarod races; spearheaded the effort to resurrect World War II P-38s interred in Greenland's ice; drove a team of huskies in President Reagan's inaugural parade in Washington, D.C.; gave Pope John Paul II a lesson in dog mushing during the pontiff's 1981 visit to Anchorage; initi-

ated the annual re-enactment of the 1925 Nenana-to-Nome serum run; wrote a couple of books; and ascended 10,302-foot Mount Vaughan, named for him by Adm. Richard Byrd.

Even more memorable to me are some personal experiences involving Vaughan. When my family was vacationing on a Maine island in 1966, Norman drove up from his Massachusetts home to visit us, entralling my children with a fascinating repertoire of stories and a supply of his famous homemade root beer. When he first lived in Anchorage he walked from his tiny downtown apartment to and from his night-shift janitorial job at the university, with never a complaint.

Through his friendship with the Dr. Schultz band, I came to know those talented musicians who brightened the Anchorage scene in the late 1970s. When Joe Redington Sr. sold one-square-foot parcels of his Knik land to raise money for the creation of the now world-famous Iditarod race, Norman presented each of my four children with a landowner's deed, prompting my youngest to observe that if they pooled the deeds, "we could build a very small but very tall house."

Recently, one of my young grandsons, having seen Norman in a TV ad, was awestruck to learn that I knew Norman personally. He was further awed when I took him to visit the Vaughan home, where Norman talked with him not about his own accomplishments but about the child's interests, experiences and ambitions, encouraging him to pursue his special dreams.

Today, Col. Vaughan attains another remarkable goal—his 100th birthday. During that century he has enjoyed more spectacular adventures and significant achievements than the average person can imagine or aspire to. He had hoped to spend his 100th birthday atop his eponymous mountain in Antarctica, a lofty goal which could not be realized. It is said that when he was advised that the trip was not going to happen, his typically positive response was, "Oh well, just not this year."

It is a privilege to call this great, good man my friend. Happy birthday, Norman!

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS AND IMPACTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, with a sense of continued disappointment and dismay I read accounts of the administration's performance at the recent international climate change meetings in Montreal, Canada.

The President has been crystal clear in his complete rejection of the Kyoto Protocol treaty that all other major industrialized nations have signed, except the United States and Australia. Yet he has regularly failed to put forward a constructive alternative that will ever result in stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Worse, his negotiators have disrupted other nations' efforts to begin binding discussions for the post-Kyoto Protocol period.

This is not and cannot be a partisan issue. But the President's stubborn insistence on ignoring credible science and his administration's efforts to water down clear scientific evidence of manmade global warming has hobbled many Republicans' ability to act sensibly on this matter.

We have a moral obligation to take on our enormous share of responsibility for this global problem before it