

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment (No. 5212) was agreed to.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 6143), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

ACCEPTING AND DISPLAYING A BUST OF SOJOURNER TRUTH

Mr. ENSIGN. I ask unanimous consent the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4510, and that the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4510) to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to accept the donation of a bust depicting Sojourner Truth and to display the bust in a suitable location in the rotunda of the Capitol.

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

Mr. ENSIGN. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4510) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 4080

Mr. ENSIGN. I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4080) to amend title 17, United States Code, with respect to settlement agreements reached with respect to litigation involving certain secondary transmissions of superstations and network stations.

Mr. ENSIGN. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. ENSIGN. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

IMPROVING AMERICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, for 12 years, I have served the people of Tennessee as a U.S. Senator. Before I joined this body, I spent 20 years practicing medicine—as a transplant surgeon.

But I spent even more time—nearly 30 years—getting the education necessary for me to pursue a career at the cutting edge of transplant surgery.

Without that education, I couldn't have pursued my dream of helping people.

The fact is, education is an essential cornerstone in our society. Not just in the United States but around the world—across the global society.

Not only does a sound education increase the global competitiveness of America's workforce, but it also enables each and every worker to pursue the American dream, in his or her own way.

Here in America, we have a rich history of working hard. We set goals. We visualize dreams. And then we doggedly pursue them, with stubborn perseverance.

But as hard as we work, unless we possess the tools and the knowledge and the "know how," we are not optimizing our resources. That means it is our best interest to pursue the best education possible. It is in our best interest to strengthen our education system so we can better equip future generations.

That is why I have supported a number of measures that enhance America's education system.

Take the President's No Child Left Behind Act, which I proudly cosponsored. It set high standards for schools around the country. It is a comprehensive overhaul of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act based on 4 pillars: accountability and testing, flexibility and local control, funding for what works, and expanded parental options.

We laid the groundwork for No Child Left Behind with ED-Flex, to give States more flexibility in how they use Federal education dollars.

More recently, we passed the first-ever comprehensive reform and improvement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We crafted this strongly bipartisan legislation with input from parents, educators, and disability groups—with the primary goal of ensuring disabled students are achieving.

Streamlining regulations, simplifying and improving the integrity of the conflict resolution process, reducing the paperwork burden for special education teachers, improving existing discipline provisions while still ensuring disabled children's rights are protected—with every provision, we helped principals, teachers, and parents better address the needs of disabled students.

Enhancing and strengthening our Nation's education system must occur at every level—primary, secondary, and beyond, in colleges and universities.

My SMART grant legislation took education reform to the university level, and without a doubt, among the education improvements I have supported over the years, SMART grants hold pride of place in my heart.

SMART grants are a new student aid initiative that provide incentives for promoting math and science education and consequently represent a dramatic step toward ensuring America's future global economic competitiveness.

Let me put it in perspective: China and India generate scientists and engineers at a furious pace while America lags dangerously behind.

We haven't reached the crisis point yet. We still have the best research universities in the world. We take home the lion's share of Nobel prizes in the sciences. We lead the planet in most high-tech fields. And we produce more top scientists and engineers per capita than any country with an economy even close to our size.

But for every one engineer we graduate in America, China graduates eight and India graduates four.

SMART grants help America maintain our competitive edge by providing aid to Pell grant-eligible students who maintain a 3.0 GPA and major in math, science, engineering, technology, or foreign languages critical to national security during their third and fourth years of college.

These funds help incentivize more students to major in these time-intensive studies and they help America produce the quality workforce necessary to compete in today's global economy.

But there is still more Congress can do to strengthen our education system and further enhance our America's competitiveness.

Right now, we stand at a crossroads. Unless we continue moving to improve our education system at all levels, we could very well face economic stagnation and a loss of global scientific leadership.

We can't afford to let that happen.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until the hour of 11:30 with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent at the conclusion of my remarks the Senator from New Mexico, Senator BINGAMAN, be recognized.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING SENATORIAL SERVICE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this is an opportunity to recognize the service of several of our colleagues who are departing from the Senate. To Senator JEFFORDS, Senator FRIST, Senator DEWINE, Senator TALENT, Senator

SANTORUM, Senator BURNS, and Senator ALLEN, let me express my appreciation for their service to their States and their service to the Nation and wish them well. I particularly want to comment, though, on three colleagues with whom I have had the privilege of working very closely.

PAUL SARBANES

The first is my friend and my chairman, ranking member, Senator PAUL SARBANES of Maryland.

PAUL has had an extraordinarily distinguished career in the Senate, and he has been the chairman of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee and the Joint Economic Committee, and in both of those capacities he has made profound and important impacts on the banking system and the economy of the United States. Housing and urban affairs have also been improved dramatically by the efforts of PAUL SARBANES.

When it comes to understanding complex financial matters there is no one more gifted and more knowledgeable than PAUL SARBANES. He has an extraordinary record of legislative achievements. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 stands as a testimony both to his skill as a thoughtful observer of the financial scene and as a legislator. It represented major reforms in corporate governance at a time when confidence in our markets was waning dramatically after the implosions of Enron and WorldCom. Through PAUL's efforts, confidence was reestablished in a system of corporate governance which I think will stand the test of time.

In addition, in 1999 he was instrumental in the Financial Modernization Act, also known as Gramm-Leach-Bliley, and was particularly concerned that the Community Reinvestment Act aspects of the legislation be maintained because he was always committed to serving people and giving them opportunities. He understood that the franchise to operate a financial institution with Federal Deposit Insurance required a concomitant commitment to serve the community, and PAUL SARBANES has done a remarkable job of maintaining that commitment to all the communities of America, particularly those that need an opportunity, need a chance to move forward.

As chairman of the Joint Economic Committee in the late 1980s, he was a thoughtful and careful analyst, someone who I think led the way analytically to the changes in the 1990s that returned us to a balanced budget and a robust economy. PAUL SARBANES in many respects, through his work on the Joint Economic Committee, was the architect of those efforts in the 1990s.

He has long had a concern about our role internationally in economic affairs. He was one of the first Members to raise concerns about Chinese currency and its impact on our trade, our productivity, and our manufacturing base. In the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, he mandated

that the Treasury Department report semiannually to Congress about international economic and exchange rate policies. I think this is the lever that today is used to rally support, debate and attention to the issue of currency exchange rate policies.

He has also, in his capacity as a leader on the Banking and Urban Affairs Committee, been active in promoting transit throughout the United States. He made sure that our transit systems are supported, and are able to provide greater accessibility, environmental benefits, while reducing the demand on foreign oil. His insights into transit, and his leadership, have benefitted everyone in the country, particularly the 14 million Americans who rely on mass transit every day.

He has also been a champion for affordable housing. He has been the author of the Home Investment Partnerships Program, known as HOME. During the past 16 years it provided funding to our States and localities to improve affordable housing. He was one of the key legislators who offered the Market-to-Market Program, which preserved so much of our affordable housing, making sure low-income people have a chance to live in decent and affordable environments.

He has had the able assistance of Steve Harris, Marty Gruenberg, Pat Mulloy, Johnathan Miller, Dean Shahinian, Sarah Kline, Aaron Klein, Lee Price, Patience Singleton, Jen Fogel-Bublick, Steve Kroll, and Lynsey Graham.

I want to express my best wishes to PAUL, to his wife Christine, and their family. His son, John, is now the new Representative for the United States House in the Third District of Maryland, so the Sarbanes tradition carries on.

Let me conclude by saying there is a word in Greek for integrity and intelligence, and that word is Sarbanes.

PAUL, good luck.

LINCOLN CHAFEE

Let me also recognize my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator LINCOLN CHAFEE. Senator CHAFEE is an individual both with character and sincere devotion to our State and Nation, an honest, decent man who is always respectful, thoughtful, and fair-minded. He is someone with whom we are all proud to have served. He is someone in this House respected for his integrity and for his determination.

He came to the Senate upon the passing of his father, Senator John H. Chafee, and picked up that tradition of service from his father. He was a great model to emulate, and Senator LINCOLN CHAFEE has done that. Like his father, he has concerned himself with issues of the environment through service on the Environment and Public Works Committee. He sought to improve our Nation's water and air quality standards. His pivotal work to provide for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields is a commitment and accomplishment that I think will be recognized for many years to come.

He has also tried to preserve our State of Rhode Island's industrial, natural, and cultural history, and he has done it persistently. Let me applaud him for his dedicated service and wish him and his family well in the days ahead.

MARK DAYTON

Finally, let me say a word about my colleague and friend, Senator MARK DAYTON. He is retiring after 6 years in the Senate. He began his public life much earlier, in 1990, as a public school teacher in New York City, and throughout his work he has dedicated himself to help the people of Minnesota and the people of this great Nation. He has placed himself on the front lines to provide better health care for seniors in Minnesota. He has worked closely on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP. He has a good head and a great heart and he served with distinction. I wish him well as he leaves the Senate.

To all my colleagues who served and conclude their service, let me once again express deep appreciation for their friendship and for their service to the Nation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, unless a Republican Senator appears wishing to speak, that Senator STABENOW of Michigan be allowed to follow.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICARE

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about two issues, legislative issues, that still require attention before this Congress adjourns. The first is related to Medicare cuts. Effective January 1, Medicare reimbursement to health care providers is scheduled to be cut by 5 percent. I believe it is imperative that Congress step in and prevent that cut from occurring. Failure to do so will lessen access to quality health care for many in this country.

The sustainable growth rate, the SGR, as it is referred to here in Washington more commonly, was implemented in 1998 as a means to annually adjust Medicare's physician fees in line with a set of spending targets. Until 2002, the total physician spending was below the set targets, so physicians received an annual increase in their fees. However, starting in 2002, the trend was reversed. Spending on physician services began to exceed the target. The result was a 4.8 percent reduction in physician fees in 2002 and the realization that the SGR, or this sustainable growth rate formula, was flawed.

This was the beginning of what has become a yearly game of brinksmanship, and we are in that game of brinksmanship again today