

This committee has helped to create and implement an impressive list of community-wide activities including: sustainability curriculum, courses, and service learning opportunities; a Web site with useful resources; and an annual Earth Day celebration.

The North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee also helped incorporate new resource management practices into campus operations and expanded the campus trail system. By providing these services, the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee has done a wonderful job of engaging students, teachers, and local citizens.

I believe that in order to truly embrace the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow, the youth of our Nation must have access to programs that foster stewardship and long-term commitment to community awareness. Washington State is fortunate to have schools like North Seattle Community College, which is a natural arena for the kind of innovation our Nation needs in order to embrace new environmentally friendly practices. Green programs and activities are critical to the development of environmentally aware citizens. I was proud to introduce the Higher Education Sustainability Act to help provide resources for college and universities to implement sustainability programs, and my hope is that schools like North Seattle Community College will continue to serve as great role models for other colleges around the Nation as they work on sustainability issues.

It is inspiring to see that the issue of sustainability is bringing people together, and I am proud North Seattle Community College is empowering the entire campus to work on positive solutions. I am sure North Seattle Community College will continue to be successful in inspiring change and providing continued leadership on this important issue.●

● Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, with Earth Day just a week away, I wish to recognize the steps colleges and universities in my State are taking to increase public awareness about the effect our daily actions have on the environment. Specifically, I would like to applaud the commitment North Seattle Community College has made to incorporate sustainable practices into everyday life at the college and local level.

Sustainability, the simple idea that we can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is a concept that is relevant to our lives now more than ever. Today, our reliance on fossil fuels is not only exacerbating economic woes, it is driving too many of our foreign policy decisions and fueling the detrimental forces of climate change. It is time we shift our focus to sustainable practices that encourage a cleaner environment, healthier communities, a stronger economy, and most importantly, national security.

My home State of Washington has always been a leader when it comes to environmental sustainability. For 75 years we have been on the cutting edge of utilizing natural resources to create sustainable, clean emissions power. I think that Washingtonians, living next door to some of the most pristine river valleys and snowcapped peaks in the world, realize how unfair it would be if our great-grandchildren couldn't do the same.

Furthering our State's environmentally conscious tradition, in the spring of 2005, North Seattle Community College president Dr. Ron LaFayette put NSCC on track to be a leader in the sustainability movement by creating a standing advisory Sustainable Committee to address issues of sustainability at the school.

The committee, made up of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and interested citizenry, began meeting regularly in 2006. Since then, it has spearheaded NSCC's efforts to become a local and national model for sustainability practices.

The Sustainability Committee created and has begun to implement goals that include creating and developing a fact sheet, Web site, and other information-sharing methodology; creating and coordinating curriculum around sustainability issues. This includes developing new stand-alone courses, integrated studies programs, service learning and distance learning opportunities; furthering the development of a campus trail system, including a walking trail and an interpretive nature trail; incorporating sustainable practices into campus operations—including food service, waste management, and resource usage; and sponsoring the annual Earth Week celebration. In 2007, this festival included guest speakers and over 35 vendors including educational institutions, environmental nonprofits, and neighborhood businesses.

I am personally encouraged by the attention North Seattle Community College and other Washington State schools have given to advancing sustainable practices in our schools and communities. I hope more institutions of higher education will follow suit in years to come.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:53 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3548. An act to enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing plain language as the standard style for Government documents issued to the public, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contractor grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2731. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-325).

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 2855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to adjust the dollar amounts used to calculate the credit for the elderly and the permanently disabled for inflation since 1985; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide taxpayers a flat tax alternative to the current income tax system; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD):

S. 2857. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the distribution of a share of certain mineral revenues, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. INOUE):