

Let me offer some examples of how this might work.

An employee of the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, who specializes in development strategy could rotate to a DOD counterinsurgency office to advise DOD in planning on how development issues should be taken into account in military operations, while a DOD counterinsurgency specialist could rotate to USAID to advise on how development priorities should be assessed in a counterinsurgency.

A Treasury employee who does terrorist finance work could benefit from a rotation to Department of Justice to understand operations to take down terrorist cells and how terrorist finance work can help identify and prosecute their members, while a Justice employee would have the chance to learn from the Treasury's financial expertise in understanding how sources of funding can affect cells' formation and plotting.

An HHS employee who specializes in public health could rotate to a DOD counterinsurgency office to advise on improving public health in order to win over the hearts and minds of the population to counter insurgency, while a DHS employee could rotate to HHS in order to learn about HHS's work to prepare the U.S. public health system for a biological terrorist attack.

The cosponsors of this amendment and I recognize the complexity involved in the creation of interagency communities of interest, the institution of rotations across a wide variety of government agencies, and having a rotation as a prerequisite for selection to certain Senior Executive Service positions. As a result, our legislation gives the executive branch substantial flexibility—including to identify interagency communities of interest; to identify which positions in each agency are within a particular interagency community of interest; to identify which positions in an interagency community of interest should be open for rotation and how long the rotations will be; and, finally, which Senior Executive Service positions have interagency rotational service as a prerequisite.

To be clear, this legislation does not mandate that any agency be included in an interagency community of interest or the interagency personnel rotations; instead, this legislation permits the executive branch to include any agency or part of an agency as the executive branch determines that our Nation's national and homeland security missions require.

Finally, I wish to stress that this amendment is designed to be implemented with no cost to the executive branch.

First, this amendment is designed to be implemented without requiring any additional personnel for the executive branch. The amendment envisions that rotations will be conducted so that there is a reasonable equivalence be-

tween the number of personnel rotating out of an agency and the number rotating in. That way, no agency will be short staffed as a result of having sent its best and brightest to do rotations; each agency will be receiving the best and brightest from other agencies.

Second, this amendment relies on the office that is currently implementing the executive branch's national security professional development program to implement this framework instituted by this amendment. This office is currently housed at DOD, and the legislation would move the office and its three employees to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management, which have oversight responsibility for this framework. Thus, no new staff would be required to administer the framework set forth in the amendment.

Third, this amendment has a 5-year implementation period which requires the executive branch to create two interagency communities of interest—for emergency management, and stabilization and reconstruction—to restrict the number of personnel doing rotations to 20 to 25 per year per each of these two interagency communities of interest, and to restrict the rotations to within a metropolitan area in order to avoid any relocation costs.

Fourth, this amendment requires that personnel doing a rotation receive the same training by the receiving agency that the receiving agency would provide to its own new employees, rather than more elaborate training that would incur costs.

And fifth, this amendment requires that any reports produced pursuant to the amendment be submitted on line rather than published in hard copy.

Let me close by answering a common objection to government reorganization. To quote the 9/11 Commission:

An argument against change is that the nation is at war, and cannot afford to reorganize in midstream. But some of the main innovations of the 1940s and 1950s, including the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and even the construction of the Pentagon itself, were undertaken in the midst of war. Surely the country cannot wait until the struggle against Islamic terrorism is over.

I urge my colleagues to take bold action to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our government in countering 21st century national security and homeland security threats by promptly adopting this amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012.

REPEAL OF JACKSON-VANIK
TRADE RESTRICTIONS ON
MOLDOVA

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise in support of an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, which would repeal the Cold War-era Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions on Moldovan products and thereby provide impetus for closer U.S. strategic engagement between our two nations.

I have introduced this legislation in the previous three Congresses and believe that the time is ripe for Moldova to finally be granted permanent normal trade relations. Moldova has been in the WTO since 2001 but still remains subject to Jackson-Vanik, despite currently being in full compliance with Jackson-Vanik-related concerns. Until the United States terminates application of Jackson-Vanik on Moldova, the U.S. will not benefit from Moldova's market access commitments nor can it resort to WTO dispute resolution mechanisms. While all other WTO members currently enjoy these benefits, the United States does not.

The Republic of Moldova has been evaluated every year and granted normal trade relations with the United States through annual presidential waivers from the effects of Jackson-Vanik. The Moldovan constitution guarantees its citizens the right to emigrate and this right is respected in practice. Most emigration restrictions were eliminated in 1991 and virtually no problems with emigration have been reported since independence. More specifically, Moldova does not impose emigration restrictions on members of the Jewish community. Synagogues function openly and without harassment. As a result, several past administrations, including this one, have found that Moldova is in full compliance with Jackson-Vanik's provisions.

The United States and Moldova have established a strong record of achievement in security and non-proliferation cooperation. We have encouraged Moldova's ambition of European integration, particularly in light of the new coalition that was swept to power in 2009, the Alliance for European Integration.

One of the areas where we can deepen U.S.-Moldovan relations is bilateral trade. In light of its adherence to freedom of emigration requirements, compliance with threat reduction and cooperation in the global war on terrorism, the products of Moldova should not be subject to the sanctions of Jackson-Vanik.

The continued support and encouragement of the United States and the international community will be key to encouraging the Government of Moldova to follow through on important reforms. The permanent waiver of Jackson-Vanik and establishment of permanent normal trade relations will be the foundation on which further progress in a burgeoning economic, trade, and security partnership can be made.

I am hopeful that my colleagues will join me in supporting this important amendment.

FDIC

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the Senate an issue of critical importance.

Last night, the Senate was able to pass by unanimous consent legislation

that will provide much needed transparency to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation process of examining and resolving bank failures.

Not only is this an issue that has severely impacted the wellbeing of my state of Georgia, but this Nation is suffering as a whole.

There are some communities across the country that are no longer have a bank to serve them and will continue to suffer on their economic development efforts because the sole bank in their community has failed.

Since 2008 there has been over 400 bank failures nationwide. Seventy of those failures have occurred in Georgia. This year alone 18 banks in Georgia have failed.

While that represents over 27 percent of all the banks in my State, this is not just a Georgia issue.

There are nine other States that have extraordinarily high rates of failures including: Florida, Illinois, California, Minnesota, Washington, Michigan, Nevada, Missouri, and Arizona.

Unfortunately, there will continue to be bank failures in this country and this bill will provide the Congress with information about the underlying fundamentals that cause these failures.

The bill directs the FDIC IG, in consultation with Treasury and Federal Reserve IGs to study FDIC policies and practices with regard to Loss Share Agreements; the fair application of regulatory capital standards; appraisals; FDIC procedures for loan modifications; and the FDIC's handling of Consent Orders and Cease and Desist Orders.

Further, the GAO will be directed to a study those questions the FDIC IG is unable to fully explore such as the causes of the high number of bank failures; procyclical impact of fair value accounting; analysis of the impact of failures on the community; and, the overall effectiveness of loss share agreements for resolving banks.

The swift passage of this legislation by the House of Representatives in July was a rare instance of bipartisan support and a sincere acknowledgement to the American people that bank failures on the whole need to be carefully considered by the Congress.

The FDIC does a commendable job of ensuring that depositors at banks they regulate are going to be able to access their money in the event of a bank failure.

I want the FDIC to know that their good work does not go unnoticed by this body, however it is clear that Congress needs more information about the underlying causes of these bank failures and it is imperative that the US Congress send a clear message that "if there is a better way, then we must pursue it."

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning busi-

ness, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the years, I have visited dozens of schools in Illinois, and I have learned more about the childhood obesity problem in this country by stepping into the lunch room than I have just about anywhere else. Particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods, school staff tell me that while students might pick up a piece of fruit or a serving of vegetables, the first food choice for the majority of students is a large soda and a bag of flaming hot cheetos. But for the young people we are asking to perform at ever increasing academic levels, we should be able to provide better options for their meals.

Last year, Congress took a big step including provisions to improve school lunches in the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. The U.S. Department of Agriculture deserves credit for taking the first significant steps in 15 years to make school lunches healthier. These proposed changes would provide children with a balanced diet that includes more green leafy vegetables, limiting starchy vegetables—like french fries—to two servings a week, limiting sodium, and boosting whole grains. USDA also proposed that tomato paste could only be counted as a vegetable if a half cup of tomato paste is used. Today, only two tablespoons of tomato paste is considered a serving of a vegetable which means schools can serve pizza to fulfill a vegetable requirement and receive Federal subsidies for doing so.

I was dismayed to learn that the conferees for the Fiscal Year 2012 Agriculture Appropriations legislation have decided to slow or even stop some of the new proposed nutrition standards for school meals. The USDA's proposal is science-based and informed by 2009 recommendations from the Institute of Medicine to reduce childhood obesity and future health care costs. Rather than uphold these sound recommendations to promote children's nutrition, the conferees report will roll back these standards and continue the status quo.

But maintaining the status quo comes at a heavy cost. Federal subsidies will support a school lunch menu that is heavy on french fries and pizza, ignoring nutrition science and common sense while contributing to our country's childhood obesity epidemic. These policy riders will maintain the current standards.

Across the country school districts are showing that with creativity and determination it is possible to improve school meals on a limited budget. Two years ago Chicago Public Schools made a commitment to try to wean kids off the junk food they have grown accustomed to and has moved to improve nu-

trition standards in school lunches and breakfasts. Flaming hot cheetos are still popular but no longer ubiquitous. The school district has exceeded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Healthier U.S. School Challenge Gold Standards and is offering more fruits and vegetables, and serving more whole grains. CPS now has one of the healthiest nutrition standards in the Nation. There is certainly more work to be done, but the school district has shown how to implement healthier meals on a limited budget and should be hailed as a national leader for affordably delivering healthy food to children.

I am deeply disappointed that the conferees have decided to resist implementing better nutrition standards in our schools, rather than fighting to reduce childhood obesity among our children. I am disappointed that the voice of powerful interest groups drowned out basic nutritional science and collaborating on strategies to improve children's options at lunch time.

TRIBUTE TO MS. RUTH SMITH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I stand today to congratulate an extraordinary Kentucky woman and a dear friend of mine, Ms. Ruth Smith. Ruth was recently one of nine to receive this year's distinguished UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging Foundation's Senior Star Award, an award given each year to those who exemplify graceful aging by remaining engaged in an active lifestyle. Ruth, now 86, was recognized for her great character and outstanding service to her community during this year's Senior Star Award luncheon, which took place on October 13, 2011, in Lexington, KY.

Ruth, a longtime resident of Wayne County, KY, is an active member of the Lake Cumberland Area Development District, a quasi-governmental agency comprised of local city and county governments, and special districts in south-central Kentucky to improve life for the region's citizens. Ruth has served as a member of the LCADD's board of directors since 1993 and has served as a member of the executive committee since 2003. In 2008, Ruth was named LCADD Citizen Board Member of the Year for her exceptional work.

Currently, the LCADD serves the counties of Adair, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, McCreary, Pulaski, Russell, Taylor and Wayne by providing a regional forum to local governments to help identify issues and opportunities and then provide leadership in planning and implementing programs that will help improve the quality of life of the region's citizens.

Over the years, Ruth's strength of character, adventurous spirit, and care for her fellow man have been a constant echo throughout the many successes she has enjoyed in her life. During World War II, Ruth traveled from her home in Pennsylvania to California to work in a factory—her personal contribution to the war effort. Some years