

of the last several days I am optimistic that the Good Friday Accords remain the key to unlocking the formula for a lasting peace throughout Ireland. With the help of the British, Irish and American governments, there is still time for Northern Ireland's political leaders to find within themselves the courage to move forward with the implementation of the Accords. I hope and pray they do so before that time runs out.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, July 14, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,624,306,987,432.02 (Five trillion, six hundred twenty-four billion, three hundred six million, nine hundred eighty-seven thousand, four hundred thirty-two dollars and two cents).

One year ago, July 14, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,530,848,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred thirty billion, eight hundred forty-eight million).

Five years ago, July 14, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,624,996,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred twenty-four billion, nine hundred ninety-six million).

Ten years ago, July 14, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,800,265,000,000 (Two trillion, eight hundred billion, two hundred sixty-five million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$2 trillion—\$2,824,041,987,432.02 (Two trillion, eight hundred twenty-four billion, forty-one million, nine hundred eighty-seven thousand, four hundred thirty-two dollars and two cents) during the past 10 years.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week marks the 25th Anniversary of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. I had hoped as part of celebrating the silver anniversary of the passage of this landmark legislation that the Congress would be sending to President Clinton for signature, S. 249, the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act. This legislation reauthorizes programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as well as authorizes funding for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Both programs are critical to our nation's youth and to our nation's well-being.

Unfortunately, the bill is still being held up for no good reason. I have been working since 1996 to enact this legislation. Last Congress and again this Congress, we have been able to clear the passage of this important legislation on the Democratic side of the aisle.

I had hoped that by the end of this week my colleagues on the other side of the aisle could be persuaded to let

this legislation pass the Senate and President Clinton sign it into law. The many grassroots supporters of this legislation and I remain frustrated.

If we do not pass this legislation soon, I fear it will again, as it was last Congress, be caught up in a more contentious debate on juvenile crime.

I had hoped that we had been able to move away from using this non-controversial legislation to try to pass unreasonable juvenile justice legislation. Last Congress, the Majority was roundly criticized for its tactic, which the New York Times labeled a "stealth assault on juvenile justice." That procedural gimmick cost us valuable time to get this legislation enacted.

This year, it appeared that such procedural ambushes had been avoided in the Senate and minimized in the House. In late May, the Senate had a full and fair debate on a juvenile justice bill. After significant improvements through amendments, the Hatch-Leahy juvenile justice bill passed the Senate on May 20, 1999 by a strong bipartisan vote. The House finally considered juvenile crime legislation in June, although the Republican leadership has steadfastly blocked a House-Senate conference on the Hatch-Leahy bill.

Separately, in April of this year the Senate passed S. 249, the Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children Protection Act of 1999. In May, the House passed S.249 with an amendment. As I explained in a floor statement on June 30, I was hopeful that the Senate would immediately take up and pass the amended version of S.249 and worked to do that. I consulted with the Department of Health and Human Services about certain concerns I had with the House amendment and was reassured that Vermont would not be adversely affected by it. I noted my disagreement with other aspects of the House action and ways to deal with those without holding final passage of S.249 hostage. I regret to report, however, that this important legislation has been in Senate limbo since late May.

The guts of the legislation remain the Leahy-Hatch substitute language to S.249 that was reported by the Judiciary Committee and which passed the Senate in April. We were careful to recognize the important work of these programs in Vermont, as well as the many other programs and staff across the U.S. that are working effectively with runaway and homeless youth and their families. The House-inserted amendments do nothing to change the special care we took in the Senate to craft the main components of this legislation.

The Leahy-Hatch substitute language preserves current law governing the minimum grants available for small States for the Basic Center grants and also preserves the current confidentiality and records protections for runaway and homeless youth.

In addition, our substitute amendment reauthorizes the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Rural Demonstration Projects. This program provides targeted assistance to States with rural juvenile populations. Programs serving runaway and homeless youth have found that those in rural areas are particularly difficult to reach and serve effectively.

Under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, every year each State is awarded a Basic Center grant for housing and crisis services for runaway and homeless children and their families. The funding is based on its juvenile population, with a minimum grant of \$100,000 currently awarded to smaller States, such as Vermont. Effective community-based programs around the country can also apply directly for the funding available for the Transitional Living Program and the Sexual Abuse Prevention/Street Outreach grants. The Transitional Living Program grants are used to provide longer term housing to homeless teens age 16 to 21, and to help these teenagers become more self-sufficient. The Sexual Abuse Prevention/Street Outreach Program also targets teens who have engaged in or are at risk of engaging in high risk behaviors while living on the street.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act does more than shelter these children in need. As the National Network for Youth has stressed, the Act's programs "provide critical assistance to youth in high-risk situations all over the country." This Act also ensures that these children and their families have access to important services, such as individual, family or group counseling, alcohol and drug counseling and a myriad of other resources to help these young people and their families get back on track.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services in Vermont show positive results. For those who do not think rural areas have significant numbers of runaway youth, I note that in fiscal year 1998, the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and Spectrum Youth & Family Services ("the Coalition"), reported that 81 percent of the 1,067 youths served by the Coalition programs were in a positive living situation at the close of service. They were reunited with their families, living with a friend or relative, or in another appropriate living situation. They were not in Department of Corrections or State Rehabilitative Services (SRS) custody.

Since 1992, the Coalition programs have seen a 175 percent increase in the numbers of youths served: The Coalition programs served 388 runaway and homeless youths in 1992. This number increased to 1,067 in 1997. In 1998, 61 percent of the youths served were 15, 16 or 17 years old.

The Coalition programs are the "who you gonna' call" in cases of family crisis and runaway incidents. They are a

critical part of Vermont's ability to respond pro-actively when youths and families are in crisis, and to prevent the need for later, more costly services.

The Coalition average cost per client in fiscal year 1998 was \$1,471. Each client has different needs which could mean a week of service, a month, or the entire year. The service could include housing, family counseling, or any of the array of services offered the Coalition programs. The average time a case was open in fiscal year 1998 was 54 days.

The relative costs of various services available to youths experiencing problems frequently associated with runaway and "push-out" incidents and other serious family conflict is dramatically higher. For fiscal year 1998, the costs for a bed in Vermont's Juvenile Detention system was over \$69,000; a bed in a in-patient adolescent substance abuse treatment facility was over \$54,000.

The Vermont Coalition programs provide early interventions that are more humane, and more cost effective. When one youth is diverted from entering state custody, the state of Vermont saves \$19,761. If 102 young people, or 9 percent of the 1,067 youths served in fiscal year 1998, were diverted from entering SRS Custody, then Vermont saves over \$2,000,000—four times the amount of dollars Vermont currently receives under the RHYA for service to runaway and homeless youths.

The Vermont Coalition and Spectrum Youth & Family Services should be applauded for their important work and I believe the best way to do that is to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Act, so programs like these in Vermont have some greater financial security in the future.

I want to thank the many advocates who have worked with me over the years to improve the bill and, in particular, the dedicated members of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and the National Network for Youth for their suggestions and assistance. Without these dedicated public-spirited citizens these programs could not be successful.

The other important piece of S. 249 is authorizing the nation's resource center for child protection, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). This center spearheads national efforts to locate and recover missing children and raises public awareness about ways to prevent child abduction, molestation, and sexual exploitation.

Since 1984, when the center was established, it has handled more than 1.3 million calls through its national Hotline 1-800-THE-LOST; trained more than 151,755 police and other professionals; and published more than 17 million publications that are distributed free of charge. The center has worked with law enforcement on more

than 65,173 missing child cases, resulting in the recovery of 46,031 children.

Since its creation, the center has helped 83 Vermont missing child cases and has helped resolve 82 of them. Nationwide, prior to 1990, the child recovery rate of the center was 62 percent. From 1990 through 1998, even with increasing caseloads, the recovery of children that are reported to the center has reached 91.8 percent.

Last year, the center launched a new CyberTipline. It allows Internet users to report such things as suspicious or illegal activity, including child pornography and online enticement of children for sexual exploitation.

Each month NCMEC brings chiefs and sheriffs together for special training. To date, the center has trained 728 of these law enforcement officials from all fifty states, including chiefs from Dover, Hartford, Brattleboro, and Winooski, Vermont and representatives from our State Police force.

The center also trains state and local police on crimes against children in cyberspace. Although this program has just begun, already 103 Unit Commanders from 34 states, including Vermont have been trained. In February of this year, Captain David Rich of the Hartford, Vermont Police Department attended this course.

The NCMEC trainers conducted a statewide infant abduction prevention seminar for the Vermont Chapter of the Association of the Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, attended by 252 nurses and security staff, and conducted site audits at two Vermont hospitals.

I applaud the ongoing work of the Center and hope that the Senate will promptly pass this bill so that they can proceed with their important activities with fewer funding concerns.

Mr. President, S. 249, the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act, should be passed without further delay.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE U.S. AIR FORCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I say to my colleagues in the Senate and to those listening everywhere, I rise to congratulate the U.S. Air Force on their gallantry and their bravery in risking their lives to take much-needed medicine to a woman who is now a scientist working in Antarctica on a National Science Foundation expedition.

This woman recently discovered a lump in her breast and needs medical treatment. She cannot leave Antarctica until the middle of October because of the horrendous weather conditions. She can't get out and nobody can get to her. But God bless the U.S. Air Force. They were willing to step forward at great risk to themselves to take the much-needed medicine, and at a very specific moment, drop the six

packages that will be able to provide her with treatment, through the genius of telemedicine.

Imagine the terror of a woman who discovers a lump in her breast. Imagine if this lump is discovered while you are serving at a remote research station on the South Pole, which is completely inaccessible during many months of the year. A plane has never landed on the South Pole during the winter. So how could she hope to get the medical supplies she needed for treatment?

This is the situation faced by a woman serving at the National Science Foundation's Amundsen-Scott research station at the South Pole. She could neither leave the station nor expect outside help until October. We all know when a lump is discovered, immediate treatment is essential. That is part of what we have been arguing about.

But guess what. This is when our U.S. Air Force became involved. We are all so proud of what they do to protect America's values and interests around the world. Most recently, they were successful in ending genocide and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

But on this mission to the South Pole, they were called on to act as humanitarians. Flying from New Zealand, the 23-person crew had to fly their aircraft for nearly a 7,000-mile round trip. They had limited visibility. They had to make their drop with great precision—since the medicine and equipment could not be exposed to the harsh conditions for more than a few minutes. Personnel on the ground also showed great skill and courage. They came outside in 70-below degree weather to plot the drop site with a great big letter "C" so the supplies could be dropped in the right spot, and they could be there at the right time to get it.

All Americans were awed by their skill and bravery. It was led by Major Greg Pike and his crew. They made their drop successfully, returned safely, and the supplies are now being used.

For those of us who saw the news, we know the U.S. Air Force risked themselves because if that plane ran into difficulty, they were at a point of no return. When they opened up the plane to be able to drop this much-needed medicine, they had to put special gear on because they themselves were facing temperatures at 150 degrees below zero. But they did it because they had the "right stuff" to make sure she had the right medicine. I tell you, it was quite a moment to see. Those great guys also sent her a bouquet of flowers and pictures of themselves and their families.

Mr. President, this also reminds us of the bravery of our National Science Foundation staff who have also worked in very difficult conditions to conduct the important scientific research.

We say to her, to the lady in the Antarctic, if she can watch us on C-SPAN: God bless you. We are pulling for you,