

United States opposition to such a unilateral declaration of statehood.

SENATE RESOLUTION 22

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of Senate Resolution 22, a resolution commemorating and acknowledging the dedication and sacrifice made by the men and women who have lost their lives serving as law enforcement officers.

SENATE RESOLUTION 26

At the request of Mr. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 26, a resolution relating to Taiwan's Participation in the World Health Organization.

SENATE RESOLUTION 33

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 33, a resolution designating May 1999 as "National Military Appreciation Month."

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO PORK PRODUCERS TO ALLEVIATE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FACED BY THE PRODUCERS

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. KERREY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. CON. RES. 8

Whereas the price for domestic live hogs has declined by 72 percent since July 1997;

Whereas on December 12, 1998, the price of domestic live hogs decreased to below \$10 per hundredweight for the first time since 1955;

Whereas pork producers are losing between \$55 and \$70 on each hog the producers sell;

Whereas, adjusted for inflation, prices paid to pork producers for live hogs have not been this low since the Great Depression;

Whereas based on estimates made by the Secretary of Agriculture, pork producers are losing approximately \$144,000,000 in equity per week and lost more than \$2,500,000,000 in equity during 1998;

Whereas low prices for hogs are threatening the livelihood of tens of thousands of farm families and the very existence of suppliers, equipment dealers, and main street businesses in rural communities across the United States;

Whereas the domestic demand for pork increased by up to 7.1 percent during 1998 despite average retail prices for pork remaining roughly the same;

Whereas despite the loss of markets in Asia and Russia, pork exports from the United States during 1998 increased by 28 percent;

Whereas a primary cause of these increased pork exports is increased pork supply intensified by an increase of pork imports from Canada and a reduction in domestic slaughter capacity for hogs;

Whereas the slaughter plant bottleneck for hogs has been exacerbated by approximately

100,000 Canadian hogs being trucked to the United States for slaughter each week; and

Whereas a 37 percent increase in the number of Canadian hogs being exported to the United States for slaughter has caused the number of live hogs to exceed the 383,000 daily slaughter capacity of United States plants, depriving domestic pork producers of all leverage in bargaining for a fair price: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),*

**SECTION 1. NEED FOR ASSISTANCE FOR PORK PRODUCERS.**

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the President and the Secretary of Agriculture are commended on their efforts to assist pork producers in alleviating economic conditions faced by the producers; and

(2) additional assistance needs to be provided to pork producers to alleviate the economic conditions.

**SEC. 2. FORMS OF ASSISTANCE FOR PORK PRODUCERS.**

To alleviate the economic conditions that are faced by pork producers, it is the sense of Congress that the President should—

(1) immediately request an emergency supplemental appropriation to provide funds for providing—

(A) guarantees of farm ownership loans under subtitle A of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.), and operating loans under subtitle B of that Act (7 U.S.C. 1941 et seq.), made to pork producers; and

(B) assistance to pork producers under the interest rate reduction program established under section 351 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1999) and other provisions of that Act that authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to reduce or subsidize the interest rate paid by pork producers;

(2) prepare and submit to Congress a report that analyzes the feasibility and cost of implementing, not later than 30 days after enactment, a program to provide disaster assistance to pork producers, including assistance in the form of—

(A) economic assistance;

(B) an expanded loan and debt restructuring program; and

(C) compensation for lost markets as a result of increased pork imports;

(3) continue to facilitate the donation and distribution of pork and pork products for humanitarian purposes;

(4) work with the Canadian Government to address the many problems that contribute to the increased export of pork and pork products into the United States;

(5) take appropriate steps to encourage increased use and expansion of the domestic slaughter capacity for hogs;

(6) direct the Secretary of Agriculture, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Commerce to investigate noncompetitive and antitrust practices in the pork industry;

(7) direct the Secretary of Agriculture to improve price reporting in the domestic livestock industry to ensure fair, open, and competitive markets; and

(8) immediately implement the loan guarantee paperwork reduction regulation of the Secretary of Agriculture that will allow pork producers and lenders to use existing lender documents, rather than creating new documents, when applying for loan guarantees under the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 et seq.).

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that an oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee On National Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The purpose of this hearing is to review the President's proposal fiscal year 2000 Budget for National Park Service programs and operations.

The hearing will take place on Wednesday, February 24, 1999, at 2 p.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, SD-364 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-6150.

For further information, please contact Jim O'Toole or Shawn Taylor of the committee staff at (202) 224-6969.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RURAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

• Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the Nation's rural health infrastructure is facing immense pressures. Changes in the private market, Medicare, Medicaid, and costs of new technologies, treatments and education are squeezing many providers out of rural areas. The President's budget shows a surprising lack of sensitivity to the critical realities in these underserved areas.

First, the President would cut reimbursement to hospitals an additional \$9 billion over the next five years. This comes before most providers have had time to absorb the full impact of the Balanced Budget Act. Rural hospitals have lower patient volumes than urban hospitals, and they serve populations with a larger proportion of seniors, on average, than urban populations. In addition, nearly 20% of rural individuals don't carry health insurance. The burden this imposes on rural providers is intensified by the President's reduction of bad debt payments to hospitals by 10%.

Congress has begun to address these problems, and late last year, we provided \$25 million for state implementation of the Rural Hospital Flexibility Program. This program creates cost-based reimbursement for Critical Access Hospitals. The money will help states develop and implement a rural health plan, develop networks, designate Critical Access Hospitals, and to