

University, has requested support from USAID as a \$20 million, five-year program. The purpose of this program is to find innovative ways to fight infectious diseases in the region, and calls upon these Universities to build a permanent, collaborative infrastructure for improving the health of the Palestinian and Israeli people.

United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said the most important projects for promoting peace and cooperation between nations are what she calls "people projects"—those projects that people of all races, religions, and beliefs can support. This program, which seeks to protect local people from the infectious and parasitic diseases that are among the leading causes of death in the West Bank and Gaza, is a great example of fostering cooperation through people projects of mutual interest.

USAID has successfully funded similar health programs in Egypt and Turkey, but this is the first such program proposed for the Israeli and Palestinian people. Members of Congress, the President, and the State Department all support this program. If USAID funds the program, it would give the United States scientific and fiscal oversight through both USAID and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

I support the funding for this regional collaborative effort as a powerful example of what a working relationship should be in the Middle East and I believe that it should be given the highest funding priority out of the Wye package.

THE FEMA EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, as a cosponsor of S. 1516, legislation reauthorizing the Federal Emergency Administration's Emergency Food and Shelter program, I am very pleased that the Senate is about to pass this legislation and send it to the House of Representatives. I hope that our colleagues in the House will swiftly approve this important bill, so that it can be sent to President Clinton for his signature before our legislative session adjourns for the year.

FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter (EFS) program provides financial assistance to supplement community efforts to provide food, shelter, and other valuable items to homeless and hungry people around the country. Most of the EFS' monies are distributed directly to local boards, which are comprised of representatives from religious and charitable organizations from the surrounding area. These boards then award grants to non-profit, voluntary, and social service organizations, which assist individuals with their food, shelter, or emergency assistance costs. Using a local distribution network helps to ensure that the EFS' funds are

targeted to those who most need assistance.

To its credit, FEMA has been very successful in keeping the administrative costs of this program very low. In fact, these costs consume less than 3 percent of the funding, which is an inspiring example that all of the Federal Government's agencies and departments should strive to follow.

In Maine, the EFS program has been extremely helpful. For example the Sister Mary O'Donnell Shelter, located in Presque Isle, Maine, received a \$10,500 grant from this program. Amazingly enough, this shelter was able to use this modest funding to provide the equivalent of 1,974 nights of shelter for the homeless in northern Maine.

EFS is a very successful program that carefully targets its resources where they are needed most, and does so with an absolute minimum of administrative expense. The Government Affairs Committee approved this legislation with a unanimous voice vote on November 3, 1999, and I hope the full Senate will do likewise.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSISTANCE AND BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly support the current reauthorization of the Developmental Disabilities Act, and I commend Senator JEFFORDS for his leadership in making this reauthorization a priority.

I also commend the members of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the administration for their leadership in developing this bipartisan bill. I especially want to recognize TOM HARKIN for his leadership and continued commitment to individuals with disabilities. I also commend all the staff members for their skillful work to make this process successful.

Today, I particularly want to take this opportunity to say thank you to my sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver for her many years of extraordinary dedication and commitment to children and adults with mental retardation and their families. Had it not been for her vision and commitment on behalf of people with mental retardation, the Developmental Disabilities Act would not be the impressive success it is today.

For many years, since the Developmental Disabilities Act was first signed into law by President Kennedy in 1963, developmental disabilities programs in the states have worked effectively to improve the lives of children and adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. The act serves as the foundation for a network of programs that offer them real choices on where to live, work, go to school, and participate in community life.

Through these programs, the 4 million individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities are able to obtain the support they need to participate in all aspects of the community. They receive needed assistance in education, and early intervention efforts are used to provide appropriate health care services and support.

For millions of Americans these services can mean the difference between dependence and independence, between lost potential and becoming contributing and participating members of their communities.

Throughout the preparation of this legislation, we have listened to consumers, advocates, families, and program administrators—all of whom have contributed significantly to this legislation. Their commitment to constructive compromise will improve the lives and choices of all people with disabilities and their families.

This reauthorization builds on the gains of the past three decades, while addressing critical and emerging needs of individuals with disabilities.

It improves the accountability of the programs under the Act by emphasizing better coordination, and by concentrating on activities related to child care, health care, housing, transportation, and recreation;

It offers wider training opportunities by strengthening the network of university centers that provide technical assistance to persons with disabilities, to their families, and to service providers across the country;

It supports stronger protection and advocacy services to prevent abuse and neglect, so that people with disabilities can live safely;

It targets funds for the development of statewide self-advocacy organizations, so that people with disabilities will have a stronger voice in determining their lives and their future;

It helps states to develop support programs for families with a disabled family member, so that living at home and becoming part of the community is a real choice for persons with disabilities; and

It provides funds to develop a new educational curriculum and establish scholarship opportunities for support workers who assist people with developmental disabilities.

This bill gives us an excellent opportunity to do more to keep the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act—by ensuring that individuals with mental retardation and other significant developmental disabilities, and their families, have realistic opportunities to obtain the support and services they need to reach their dream of being contributing members of their communities.

Disabled people are not unable. We are a better and stronger and fairer country when we open the door of