November 18, 1999

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS—GOVERNORIAL PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the Providence Gay Men’s Chorus was first conceived in a karaoke bar in Providence in October 1993. The first meeting of its original members from Rhode Island and Massachusetts was held in November 1993, in a home in Pawtucket. The name Providence Gay Men’s Chorus (PGMC) was decided on after some deliberation and the group was then underway with a music director and an accompanist; and,

Whereas, the mission of the PGMC is to provide continuing growth of men’s voices. Through the sharing of song concerts, the PGMC hopes to foster mutual understanding, tolerance and support of people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles; and,

Whereas, the membership started to blossom during the first year and moved to the James Episcopal Church in North Providence. During this year, the first board was also formed and the first concert was held in Wachonam, Massachusetts with 12 members; and,

Whereas, the chorus kept growing and moved again. This time to the Bell Street Chapel, where the small 12 member chorus was performing two seasons per year with three concerts per season. It was at the Bell Street Chapel that the PGMC achieved their first sell out audience; and,

Whereas, as membership approached 40 members, the chorus moved once again to the First Unitarian Church in Providence. During this time, the PGMC joined the national choral organization for gay and lesbians called GALA and received its first corporate sponsorship; and,

Whereas, the chorus is now approaching its fourth birthday, has a membership of 50 and is back at the Bell Street Chapel. The members will be performing series of concerts in November, singing at First Night 2000, and initiating a scholarship program. Future plans for the chorus are to bring a program to the Hasbro’s Children’s Hospital, perform to raise funds and audiences throughout the city and state, and attend the national GALA conferences; and,

Whereas, on November 14, 1999 the chorus will host a concert at the Newport Congregational Church, under the direction of Charles Pietrello and the accompaniment of Bruce Ruby;

Now, therefore, I, Lincoln Almond, Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby proclaim November 14, 1999, as Providence Gay Men’s Chorus Day.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM AND OLENE DOYLE

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I am proud to stand before my colleagues today and pay tribute to a couple who have so positively influenced the people of Washington County, Vermont over the course of their lives. Bill and Olene Doyle will be honored as the Washington County Citizens of the Year by the Green Mountain Council of Boys Scouts on November 22nd, 1999.

My old friend Bill Doyle has navigated his career as a lawyer, politician, and author. Since 1958, he has been teaching history and government at Johnson State College. In 1968, he was elected to serve as one of Washington County’s three State Senators, a role in which he has thrived for over three decades. As a skilled teacher and a master of the Vermont political rules, he has been an invaluable mentor and mediator in the Vermont State House. Bill has written two books, including The Vermont Political Tradition, which is regarded by many to be a must read of the Vermont political history. He has also taken his passion for government and politics and created the annual “Doyle Poll,” our yearly gauge of public opinion on the hottest and sometimes most controversial issues facing Vermonters. While admittedly unscientific, the poll’s results are soundly reflective of Vermont sentiment.

As the son of an art teacher, I have always held a deep respect for the arts and for those who are able to inspire creativity in our nation’s young people. Olene Doyle has taught art in elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions in the central Vermont region. Her dedication to arts and education led her to volunteer positions on the local school board in Montpelier, as well as on the board of the Wood Art Gallery, where, incidentally, I now hold the annual Congressional Arts Competition.

Bill and Olene raised three wonderful children. However, they have never stopped teaching as evidenced by their ongoing community service and involvement in their local church and non-profit organizations. Given the countless hours they dedicate to community service, it is noteworthy that the couple finds the time to pursue personal hobbies such as golf and gardening. And while I have never had the privilege of seeing the Doyle gardens, I have been told they are a vibrant reflection of the dedication which Bill and Olene give to everything they do.

I am thankful for the opportunity to express my heartfelt praise. I can think of few couples more worthy of this award. Years of partnership and devotion to each other have inevitably spilled over into the Vermont community, where Bill and Olene have truly made their mark as two of Vermont’s most influential and giving people.

BRET WAGNER ON RUSSIAN NUCLEAR MATERIALS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is important that we remember how vital our national nonproliferation programs with Russia are to our national security. That’s why I was pleased, in recent weeks, to see two articles by Brett Wagner in the San Francisco Chronicle and in the Wall Street Journal, which I would like to submit for the Record.

Mr. WAGNER. Brett Wagner is the president of the California Center for Strategic Studies, and his articles bring much needed attention to an essential aspect of our nuclear nonproliferation policy—to ensure that Russian weapons-grade, highly-enriched uranium does not fall into the wrong hands. We need to live up to our agreement with Russia and strengthen our nuclear, chemical and biological nonproliferation program with that nation. Our future could well depend on it.

I believe that Mr. Wagner’s articles will be of interest to all of us in Congress who care about these issues, and I ask that they be printed in the Record.

The articles follow.

(From the San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 22, 1999)

U.S. MUST MOVE QUICKLY TO BUY RUSSIA’S EXCESS NUKES

(By Brett Wagner)

Without a doubt, what’s been most frustrating about being a national security specialist in the 1990s has been urging that the United States buy the hundreds of tons of undersecured excess weapon-grade uranium scattered across Russia. Too many people apparently hear in response that this could never happen in the real world because of Washington or Moscow’s nuking struggle to balance the federal budget.

My, how things change.

Today, Washington is awash in an unprecedented trillion-dollar budget surplus—a surplus expected to surpass $100 billion in the next fiscal year alone.

Politicians from both major parties are busy, of course, debating what to do with all the extra money. Unfortunately, neither party has even mentioned Russia’s offer to sell its enormous stockpiles of excess weapon-grade uranium to the United States as quickly as possible in exchange for badly needed hard currency.

Congressional and presidential priorities aside, it’s hard to imagine a better time to reconsider this issue.

By now, almost everyone who reads the newspaper or watches the evening news knows that Russia has yet to develop any reliable means of securing its enormous stockpiles of weapon-grade uranium and plutonium. For all intents and purposes, it has an accounting system capable of keeping track of them.

And as the media often remind us, these materials have already begun leaking into the free world—troubling news, to say the least, considering that:

The blueprints and non-nuclear components necessary to build crude but highly effective nuclear weapons are already widely available;

It only takes 20 or 30 pounds of highly enriched uranium to arm a device capable of leveling a city the size of downtown Washington;

Rogue states and terrorist groups openly hostile to the United States have already attempted several times to purchase nuclear warheads or material from Russian nuclear workers;

There is no reliable way of keeping a nuclear weapon or contraband from being smuggled into the U.S. territory if it ever does fall into the wrong hands.

What most people don’t seem to remember, however, is that for several years now Russia has been trying to sell these same undersecured stockpiles of highly enriched uranium to the United States for use as nuclear fuel in commercial power plants and, what’s more, that an agreement designed to help further this goal was signed by President Clinton and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin in February 1993.
Unfortunately, that agreement is a full year behind schedule. It was signed in February 1993 and represents only 80 tons of highly enriched uranium—30 tons of which have already been delivered. Small caches of these nuclear materials have already begun leaking out of Russia. It would only take 20 or 30 pounds of highly enriched uranium to arm a device capable of leveling a city the size of St. Petersburg.

In February 1993 Presidents Clinton and Boris Yeltsin signed an agreement for Russia to ship its U.S.-enriched uranium to the United States. It was the first agreement under which Russia could sell its excess weapon-grade uranium for use as nuclear fuel. However, the two major parties would be scrambling to make sure Moscow would accept Moscow’s offer to ship its undiluted surplus directly to the U.S. Washington should switch the power of executive agent from the U.S. Enrichment Corp. to the Department of Energy. Given the long delays in implementing the agreement, the U.S. government has not yet accepted delivery of Russia’s enriched uranium, which has already been enriched by some of Russia’s enrichment facilities. Moscow has some 700 tons of excess weapon-grade uranium, not to mention its tens of thousands of tons of excess weapon-grade plutonium. It would take 20 or 30 pounds of highly enriched uranium to arm a device capable of leveling a city the size of St. Petersburg.

The question is: How long do we have before we run out of luck? How long before some of Russia’s uranium winds up in the hands of terrorists like Osama bin Laden or regimes like Saddam Hussein’s?

Washington should switch the policy of executive agent from the U.S. Enrichment Corp. to the Department of Energy. Given that most of the delays in implementing the agreement have stemmed from America’s insistence that the highly enriched uranium be blended down into nuclear fuel in Russia, Washington should reverse this policy and accept Moscow’s offer to ship its undiluted uranium directly to the U.S.

As soon as the agreement gets back on track, Washington should ask Moscow to expand it to include all of Russia’s excess weapons-grade uranium, not to mention its tens of thousands of tons of excess weapon-grade plutonium. Moscow would then have a new incentive to sell for use as nuclear fuel.

With the 2000 election cycle beginning to pick up steam, and with the possibility of a viable third-party presidential candidate growing by the day, one would think that the two major parties would be scrambling to take the lead on this most serious of national Security issues.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 9, 1999]

NUKES FOR SALE
(By Brett Wagner)

Strangely absent from the debate over how to spend the billions of dollars America spent to defend itself and its allies against nuclear weapons during the Cold War; the trillion dollars of human life that.were wasted in the war; the million dollars of dollars that rogue states and terrorist groups have already offered Russian nuclear workers for extremely small amounts of the same nuclear material.

And there is the tremendous sense of relief in purchasing the very stuff that for so long threatened America’s very survival, and which now threatens the whole world.

With the 2000 election cycle beginning to pick up steam, and with the possibility of a viable third-party presidential candidate growing by the day, one would think that the two major parties would be scrambling to take the lead on this most serious of national Security issues.

The Presiding Officer. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL SALVAGE MOTOR VEHICLE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I am proud to add the American Automobile Association (AAA) and the California DMV to the long list of organizations that support S. 655, the National Salvage Motor Vehicle Consumer Protection Act that I introduced during this session to protect consumers from title fraud.


I also think it is worth recognizing 23 of our colleagues who have actively signaled their intention to protect motorists in their state and throughout the nation by formally supporting S. 655. Senators McCaIN, BreauX, StEvens, CONRAD, Burns, Hutchison, FrisT, AbRAHAM, MACK, warner, BenNetT, SeSSions, Murkowski, shelby, INhofe, Grams, ThomaS, RoberTS, Hatch, Thompson, Enz, KYT, and HutcHinson are to be commended for cosponsoring this important consumer protection measure.

The American Automobile Association represents over 40 million drivers. It is a nonpartisan organization that champions the interests of the driving public in virtually every city, county, and state across this great land. AAA supports S. 655 because it shares my belief that national standards for titling salvage, rebuilt salvage, non-repairable and flood damaged vehicles will help prevent the fraudulent sale of damaged vehicles and protect consumers from unknowingly purchasing them. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to