HONORING NOTAH BEGAY III AN INSPIRATION FOR ALL AMERICANS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, in celebration of American Indian Heritage Month I rise today to celebrate the accomplishments of one remarkable young man Notah Begay III. You may have heard of Mr. Begay as he was a two-time PGA tour winner this season with victories at the Reno-Tahoe Open and the Michelob Championship. This is a true accomplishment by any standard, but even more significant when you consider that he is only 27. I rise today to honor Mr. Begay because of the fact that he is the first full-blooded Native American to play on the Professional Golf Association Tour.

Notah’s path to success is uncommon among his peers in the PGA. He didn’t grow up in a privileged environment. While the Begay family was not poor, they did not have the resources to pay for costly private golf lessons for young Notah. In exchange for golf balls and practice time, Notah often woke up at 5:00 AM to move carts, wash range balls and serve as an all-around gopher at the city-owned course in Albuquerque. And when Notah visited his grandparents on the Navajo Reservation, the determined young golfer would hit golf balls off of the hard clay dirt of the reservation. Still today, the Navajo Nation does not have one golf course on its 25,000 square miles.

Despite his uncommon beginnings, Notah has been truly successful at every level of competition. During high school, Notah led his high school basketball team to back-to-back state championships. But more impressive, he was the No. 2 junior golfer in the nation.

After high school, Notah traveled west to Stanford University. Although Notah’s teammate, Tiger Woods, is often spotlighted by the media, it was Notah and his Stanford teammates who won the 1994 NCAA Championship trophy, one year before Mr. Woods joined the team. Notah played an integral role by shooting a 62 in the second round of the Championship tournament, a tournament record that remains today. And while many great college athletes do not finish their studies, I am very proud to say that Notah is a fellow graduate of Stanford, earning a degree in economics.

Notah turned pro after college and has been quickly rising in the PGA ranks. At the Nike Challenge Open this year, he became only the third player in history to shoot a 59 on a U.S. pro tour. He joins Al Geiberger and Chip Beck as the only players to score such a feat. Because of his outstanding success this year, Notah is a candidate for top rookie honors.

Notah has dedicated himself to providing new opportunities for young Native Americans. By working to raise money to establish golf programs at reservation schools and seeking donations of golf equipment for kids who could never afford the costly clubs, Notah is providing the tools that may lead to more great golfers with Native American roots.

In some ways, Notah’s success is not surprising. He is half Navajo and half Pueblo Indian and he follows a tradition of courage and strength, exemplified by his grandfather. Notah’s grandfather, Notah Begay Jr., was one of the famous Code Talkers during World War II. The Code Talkers relayed sensitive information for the United States military through a code based on the Navajo language. They proved to be a critical component of the military intelligence during World War II.

Notah’s unprecedented success has shown a generation of young Americans that with hard work and dedication, any dream is achievable. The success Notah has earned is equal only to the inspiration he provides for Native American youth in his home state of New Mexico and across the country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EAST TIMOR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about a piece of legislation that is not moving this year. I want to speak about it because it deals with an extremely important topic, one that has not received the attention and commitment that it deserves from this body.

That topic is the appropriate state of U.S.-Indonesian relations today.

Mr. President, I introduced S. 1568, the East Timor Self-Determination Act of 1999, on September 8—well over two months ago. That legislation, which passed the Foreign Relations Committee on September 27 by an overwhelming vote of 17-1, was cosponsored by the Chairman of that Committee as well as many other Members of the Senate.

I took that action, in cooperation with my colleagues, because events in East and West Timor demanded it.

On August 30, well over 99% of registered voters in East Timor courageously came to the polls to express their will regarding the political status of that territory.
Mr. President, I wanted to pursue this legislation to encourage democracy and accountability in Indonesia, and to hold our clear incentives for a policy of accountability and cooperation. And I wanted to hold this Administration to its word, ensuring that passing political whims do not soften America’s rejection of the kind of methods that the Indonesian military used in East Timor.

The amendment would have reached out to the Indonesian government, celebrating its democratic transition and recognizing its economic needs, while keeping the pressure on elements in Indonesia that are moving in the opposite direction—elements moving away from democracy, reform, and accountability and moving toward repression, violence, and impunity.

With these incentives and incentives, this amendment would have set the stage for a responsible and strong partnership between the U.S. and Indonesia.

Mr. President, it concerns me that the Administration has behaved as though they wish this legislation would just go away, although it is a codification of their own policy.

The Administration has told me that they desire more flexibility—particularly with regard to licensing defense related articles for export to Indonesia—than this amendment would allow.

Despite the fact that I worked closely and carefully with the State Department to develop a reasonable list of conditions that must be met in order to re-establish military and security relations, in the end, the Administration did not want to be pinned down to any standards at all.

Mr. President, I will speak frankly. The Administration’s unwillingness to commit to a responsible policy and to a solid series of prerequisites for resuming military and security ties concerns me, and convinces me that vigilance will be necessary in the months ahead. And so Mr. President, while I foresaw no opportunity to move this legislation this year, I want to remind this Senate and this Administration that my amendment will remain in order when we return to the bankruptcy bill, and I am prepared to take up this issue again in January, or at any other time the circumstances warrant it.

I will continue to be certain that this Senate has a voice in the future of U.S.-Indonesian relations, that I will continue to push for accountability for the abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian military and militia groups. And I will continue to insist that U.S. engagement with the Indonesian military is contingent upon an end to the harassment and intimidation of East Timorese refugees with impunity.

I pledge to my colleagues and to this Administration that I will monitor this matter, and monitor it closely in the weeks and months ahead. I will stand by, ready with several versions of my legislation, should the Indonesian military fail to take the steps toward reform and accountability that are absolutely essential prerequisites to a military and security relationship with the United States.

And make no mistake, I will come to the floor again and again should this Administration appear ready to engage with and support an Indonesian military that has not seriously lived up to its own commitment to respect the rights of ordinary East Timorese civilians who seek only to live their lives in peace and security.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

BIENNIAL BUDGETING

Mr. DOMENICI. Yesterday (November 18), House Rules Committee Chairman DAVID DREIER introduced H. Res. 396, a resolution expressing the sense of the House that biennial budgeting legislation should be enacted in the second session of the 106th Congress.

Notably, this resolution has 245 co-sponsors, significantly more than a majority of that body. Those sponsors include the entire House Republican leadership, 25 members of the House Appropriations Committee, including the Chairman, and 45 Democrats.

Critics of biennial budgeting often point to lack of support in the House as a reason why the proposal will never be adopted. That hurdle seems now to have been swept away, as significantly more than a majority of the House has been convinced by the inescapable logic and numerous advantages of a biennial budget process.

This year, we have yet again been faced with a numbing repetition of the all-too-familiar appropriations end game. Annual appropriations have been and are held up because of new policy and funding issues.

While the vast bulk of appropriations are routine and are funded from year to year with only incremental change, they nonetheless are held hostage to controversy and often unrelated budget and policy debates. This is unnecessary and counterproductive.

A biennial budget process would restore the integrity and effectiveness of the appropriations process, would reinvigorate the tradition of separate Congressional authorization and oversight, and would give Federal departments and agencies badly needed time to carry out and evaluate Federal programs more effectively.

Many Senators of both parties have long acknowledged the need for a biennial budget process. A majority of House members now concurs. Both President Clinton and Vice-President Gore support biennial budgeting, and recently Mr. George W. Bush voiced strong support for the idea.

All sides now agree that biennial budgeting is the right thing to do. Now is time to go forward. We have studied, talked, and debated enough. Let’s now resolve to act on this important bill as soon as possible when we return from the congressional adjournment.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I would like to take just a few minutes in these final hours of the First Session of the 106th Congress to discuss several legislative initiatives I authored this year, and which I am pleased to say have either passed or were substantially incorporated into other bills that were approved and will be sent to the President.

One of the most important issues for my state of Utah is the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) Amendments of 1999, S. 1515, which I introduced earlier. I am delighted that the Senate passed this important legislation earlier today.

This bill will guarantee that our government provides fair compensation to the thousands of individuals adversely affected by the mining of uranium and from fallout during the testing of nuclear weapons in the early post-war years.

Senator BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL; the distinguished Senate Minority Leader, Senator TOM DASCHLE; Senator JEFF BINGAMAN; and Senator PETE DOMENICI all joined me in introducing this legislation, and I appreciate their support.

In 1990, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (42 U.S.C. 2210) was enacted in law. RECA, which I was proud to sponsor, required the federal government to compensate those who were harmed by the radioactive fallout from atomic testing. Administered through the Department of Justice, RECA has been responsible for compensating approximately 6,000 individuals for their injuries. Since the passage of the 1990 law, I have been continuously monitoring the implementation of the RECA program.

Quite candidly, I have been disturbed over numerous reports from my Utah constituents about the difficulty they have encountered when they have attempted to file claims with the Department of Justice. I introduced S. 1515 in response to their concerns.

This bill honors our nation’s commitment to the thousands of individuals who were victims of radiation exposure while supporting our country’s national defense. I believe we have an obligation to care for those who were injured, especially since, at the time, they were not adequately warned about the potential health hazards involved with their work.

Another issue which many of my constituents contacted me about over the past year was the Medicare provisions contained in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act (BBA) and the impact of these provisions on health care providers and Medicare beneficiaries.

I am pleased that the House has given its approval to the Medicare,