

days. In 1997, the average number of days from nomination to confirmation rose dramatically yet again, and that was during the first year of a presidential term. From initial nomination to confirmation, the average time it took for Senate action on the 36 judges confirmed in 1997 broke the 200-day barrier for the first time in our history. It was 212 days. Unfortunately, that time is still growing and the average is still rising to the detriment of the administration of justice. Last year, in 1998, the Senate broke the record, again. The average time from nomination to confirmation for the 65 judges confirmed in 1998 was over 230 days.

At each step of the process, judicial nominations are being delayed and stalled. Judge Richard Paez, Justice Ronnie L. White, Judge William J. Hibbler and Timothy Dyk were each left on the Senate calendar without action when the Senate adjourned last October. Marsha Berzon, Matthew Kennelly and others were each denied a vote before the Judiciary Committee following a hearing. Helene N. White, Ronald M. Gould and Barry P. Goode, were among a total of 13 judicial nominees never accorded a hearing last year before the Judiciary Committee.

At the conclusion of the debate on the nomination of Merrick Garland to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, as 23 Republicans were preparing to vote against that exceptionally well-qualified nominee whose confirmation had been delayed 18 months, Senator HATCH said "playing politics with judges is unfair, and I am sick of it." I agree with him. I look forward to a return to the days when judicial nominations are treated with the respect and attention that they deserve.

It is my hope that we can start in the right spirit and move in the right direction by reporting out the nominations of Timothy Dyk to the Federal Circuit; Judge Richard Paez and Marsha L. Berzon to the Ninth Circuit; William J. Hibbler and Matthew F. Kennelly to the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois; and Ronnie L. White to the District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. They have each already had confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Four of the six have previously been reported favorably by the Committee. The Senate should act to confirm these six nominees before the end of the month.

We should proceed to confirmation hearings for Helene N. White, Ronald M. Gould, Barry P. Goode, Lynette Norton, Legrome D. Davis and Virginia Phillips. Each of these nominations has been before the Committee for more than nine months already. It is time for us to proceed.

With the continued commitment of all Senators we can make real progress

this year. We can help fill the long-standing vacancies that are plaguing the Federal judiciary and provide the resources needed to the administration of justice across the country.

VETERANS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Mr. JEFFORDS in co-sponsoring the Veterans' Equal Access to Medicare Act. This bill requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to create a demonstration program to allow Medicare-eligible veterans to receive their treatment at VA treatment facilities. This is a thoughtful approach to try to help our veterans, especially our elderly veterans, receive all of their treatments in one place. In the process, we hope to save money for the taxpayers and get greater benefits for our treatment dollars.

This is a voluntary program to establish 10 regional sites nationwide to provide this new service. This bill calls out several criteria for potential sites: one must be near a closed military base, one must be in a predominantly rural area, and no new buildings must be built as part of this program. I'm especially interested in the potential for Montana to be the rural site. We currently have veterans traveling hundreds of miles for their VA treatments. By establishing some type of joint VA/Medicare program, we create opportunities to expand access and improve continuity of medical care for Montana Veterans.

I'm encouraged by the awareness being raised in the VA recently for our State. The recent town meetings by the VA officials are just the beginning. My presence there was intended to show the VA how serious we take the necessity of improvement. We have to get better. My commitment through the coming months is to look for additional ways to ease communication between Montana Veterans and the Washington, D.C. establishment. We also need to increase the opportunities for Veterans to hear more about the future plans for Veterans' health care. Again, I'll be working on both of these topics this spring.

We owe our veterans a debt of service for their sacrifices for our country. The program in this bill is a great opportunity for us to be fiscally responsible while improving the care and treatment of a group of honored citizens. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

SPACE TRANSPORTATION LOAN GUARANTEES

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Mr. BREAUX in co-sponsoring the Commercial Space Transportation Cost Reduction Act. This is an appropriate extension of programs that

we have used to encourage other fledgling industries such as shipbuilding and rail. Through this legislation, we hope to build a commercially competitive launch industry here in America that brings the world's satellites to our doorstep for launch into orbit.

This bill sets up loan guarantee programs; not grant handouts, but loan guarantees to help encourage commercial investment in start-up space industries. We want to encourage anyone with an idea good enough to raise some start up funds to approach the financial market with some assurance that their request for business loans will be approved. By placing \$500 million in a NASA account in a guarantee program, we will leverage growth and investment to many times that. To encourage truly competitive ideas, we've placed a number of guidelines on this bill. We will only guarantee a maximum of 80% of the capitol required for a space vehicle construction project, the rest must be raised privately. Ten to twenty percent of the pool is set aside for small businesses, and we've specifically excluded the DoD launch vehicle development programs currently underway. There is a credit-worthiness requirement with specific loan criteria for being eligible for the loan. Finally, it guarantees the U.S. Government the best price for any launch system developed under this program. To make sure that no launch companies become dependent on this funding, we've provided for an expiration of this program in 10 years.

I'm especially interested in the potential benefit to Montana. Many start-up companies choose to locate in Western states where they have room to actively test their ideas and inventions. When combined with VentureStar's interest in Montana, this loan guarantee program could help develop a space technology region in our state that would attract high-tech companies with high-tech jobs. Montana already has a lot to offer, and I'm convinced that this program is one more way to give potential businesses a reason to make Montana their headquarters.

As seen this past summer, launching rockets is a risky business even for well-established companies. We need to find ways to encourage banks to qualitatively judge the overall risks and invest in creative new ways to get satellites into orbit. By providing loan guarantees to qualified companies, we can grow our capable domestic launch program into the world's choice for getting access to space. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting one treaty and sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT OF FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 12

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 701 of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454; 5 U.S.C. 7104(e)), I am pleased to transmit the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for Fiscal Year 1997.

The report includes information on the cases heard and decisions rendered by the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the General Counsel of the Authority, and the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2, 1999.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 350. An act to improve congressional deliberations on proposed Federal private sector mandates, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BOND, from the Committee on Small Business, without amendment:

S. 364. A bill to improve certain loan programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-6).

By Mr. GRAMM, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, without amendment:

S. 313. A bill to repeal the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, to enact the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1999, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-7).

By Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments:

S. 247. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to reform the copyright law with respect to satellite retransmissions of broadcast signals, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. WARNER, from the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. James B. Armor, Jr., 7031
 Col. Barbara C. Brannon, 0424
 Col. David M. Cannan, 3149
 Col. Richard J. Casey, 7432
 Col. Kelvin R. Coppock, 0425
 Col. Kenneth M. Decuir, 9876
 Col. Arthur F. Diehl, III, 6363
 Col. Lloyd E. Dodd, Jr., 5193
 Col. Bob D. Dulaney, 3361
 Col. Felix Dupre, 5938
 Col. Robert J. Elder, Jr., 7484
 Col. Frank R. Faykes, 4797
 Col. Thomas J. Fiscus, 5444
 Col. Paul J. Fletcher, 5438
 Col. John H. Folkerts, 4060
 Col. William M. Fraser, III, 9314
 Col. Stanley Gorenc, 8279
 Col. Michael C. Gould, 3374
 Col. Paul M. Hankins, 1000
 Col. Elizabeth A. Harrell, 1522
 Col. Peter J. Hennessey, 1571
 Col. William W. Hodges, 4545
 Col. Donald J. Hoffman, 5449
 Col. William J. Jabour, 2791
 Col. Thomas P. Kane, 9763
 Col. Claude R. Kehler, 6600
 Col. Frank G. Klotz, 6089
 Col. Robert H. Latiff, 2190
 Col. Michael G. Lee, 9675
 Col. Robert E. Mansfield, Jr., 9591
 Col. Henry A. Obering, III, 3819
 Col. Lorraine K. Potter, 9945
 Col. Neal T. Robinson, 0542
 Col. Robin E. Scott, 8526
 Col. Norman R. Seip, 6765
 Col. Bernard K. Skoch, 2109
 Col. Robert L. Smolen, 7953
 Col. Joseph P. Stein, 2625
 Col. Jerald D. Stubbs, 0457
 Col. Kevin J. Sullivan, 2930
 Col. James P. Totsch, 3674
 Col. Mark A. Volcheff, 3790
 Col. Mark A. Welsh, III, 4911
 Col. Stephen G. Wood, 7553
 Col. Donald C. Wurster, 1815

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force, to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Michael B. Smith, 0409

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Leo V. Williams, III, 3893

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. John R. Baker, 3934
 Brig. Gen. John D. Becker, 8234
 Brig. Gen. Robert F. Behler, 1612
 Brig. Gen. Scott C. Bergren, 1312
 Brig. Gen. Paul L. Bielowicz, 8502
 Brig. Gen. Franklin J. Blaisdell, 5802
 Brig. Gen. Robert P. Bongiovi, 5760
 Brig. Gen. Carrol H. Chandler, 9115
 Brig. Gen. Michael M. Dunn, 3491
 Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Goslin, Jr., 2970
 Brig. Gen. Lawrence D. Johnston, 1244
 Brig. Gen. Michael S. Kudlacz, 4038
 Brig. Gen. Arthur J. Lichte, 5483
 Brig. Gen. William R. Looney, III, 5052
 Brig. Gen. Stephen R. Lorenz, 2664

Brig. Gen. T. Michael Moseley, 1516
 Brig. Gen. Michael C. Mushala, 4529
 Brig. Gen. Larry W. Northington, 0293
 Brig. Gen. Everett G. Odgers, 2279
 Brig. Gen. William A. Peck, Jr., 3626
 Brig. Gen. Timothy A. Peppe, 8336
 Brig. Gen. Richard V. Reynolds, 1156
 Brig. Gen. Earnest O. Robbins, II, 3677
 Brig. Gen. Randall M. Schmidt, 1246
 Brig. Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, 7542
 Brig. Gen. Todd I. Stewart, 1167
 Brig. Gen. George N. Williams, 5397

(The above nominations were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services, I report favorably 40 nomination lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy which were printed in full in the Congressional Records of February 3, 1999, and February 4, 1999 and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar, that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

In the Air Force nominations beginning Bruce R. Burnham, and ending Mahender Dudani, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nominations beginning Malcolm M. Dejnozka, and ending Gaelle J. Glickfield, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nominations beginning *Les R. Folio, and ending Daniel J. Feeney, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nomination of Vincent J. Shiban, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nomination of Kymble L. McCoy, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nominations beginning Robert S. Andrews, and ending David J. Zollinger, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nominations beginning Richard L. Ayres, and ending William C. Wood, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Air Force nominations beginning Peter C. Atinopoulos, and ending George T. Zolovick, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Army nominations beginning George L. Hancock, Jr., and ending Sidney W. Atkinson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Army nominations beginning Samuel J. Boone, and ending Donna C. Weddle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.

In the Army nominations beginning Frederic L. Borch, III, and ending Stephanie D. Willson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 3, 1999.