

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, 1999 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing on Intelligence Matters.

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

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, 1999 at 10:00 p.m. to hold a hearing.

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

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 18, 1999, in open session, to review the readiness of the United States Air Force and Army Operating Forces.

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

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

## CROP INSURANCE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today as one of the proud cosponsors of S. 629, the Crop Insurance Improvement Act of 1999, sponsored by Senator CRAIG. The issue of crop insurance reform is and will continue to be a primary issue for agriculture this session.

The language offered today brings important changes to crop insurance, especially for specialty crops. This bill drastically improves procedures for determining yields and improves the non-insured crop assistance programs. This bill, S. 629, also improves the safety net to producers through cost of production crop insurance coverage.

This is another important tool to reform the current crop insurance program into a risk management program, which will return more of the economic dollar back to the producer. It is vital to find a solution to provide a way for farmers and ranchers to stay in agriculture. They must ultimately regain the responsibility for risk management the Federal Government withdrew.

To help agricultural producers do that, the Federal Government must fix the current crop insurance program and make it one the producer can use as an effective risk management tool. Eventually, I envision a crop insurance program that puts the control in the hands of agricultural producers. It is

the Federal Government's role to facilitate a program to unite the producer and the private insurance company.

It is of utmost importance that we get the producers of this country back on track. Crop insurance reform is one sure way to do that. I urge my colleagues here today to consider the positive effect crop insurance will and must have on the farm economy.

Mr. President, I look forward to working with Senator CRAIG on crop insurance reform. I will have some amendments forthcoming, that I believe will make this bill even more effective. I also plan to introduce a bill this session that I believe will make even larger strides in the area of crop insurance reform. •

## DOMESTIC HUNGER

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to briefly talk about the problem of hunger in our nation. I would also like to place into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD two recent front-page articles from the New York Times, written by Andrew Revkin. These articles provide valuable insight into the growing demand for emergency food assistance that food banks around the country have been facing over the last couple of years.

Mr. President, as we approach the beginning of the next century, we have much to be proud of as a nation. The stock market has reached an historic 10,000 mark. We are in the midst of one of the greatest economic expansions in our nation's history. More Americans own their own homes than at any time, and we have the lowest unemployment and welfare caseloads in a generation. Not to mention the fact that for the first time in three decades, there is a surplus in the federal budget.

Yet, there are millions of Americans who go hungry every day. This is morally unacceptable. We must resolve to put an end to the pernicious occurrence of hunger in our nation. Hunger is not a Democrat or Republican issue. Hunger is a problem that all Americans should agree must be ended in our nation.

While it is true that food stamp and welfare program caseloads are dropping, hunger is not. As families try to make the transition from welfare to work, too many are falling out and being left behind. And too often, it is our youth who is feeling the brunt of this, as one out of every five people lining up at soup kitchens is a child.

Second Harvest, the nation's largest hunger relief charity, distributed more than one billion pounds of food to an estimated 26 million low-income Americans last year through their network of regional food banks. These food banks provide food and grocery products to nearly fifty thousand local charitable feeding programs—food

shelves, pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters.

Just as demand is rising at local hunger relief agencies, too many pantries and soup kitchens are being forced to turn needy people away because the request for their services exceeds available food. Today I enter into the record stories detailing some of the problems that these local hunger relief agencies, as chronicled in the New York Times.

Last December, Peter Clavelle, Mayor of Burlington, Vermont, released the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Survey of Hunger and Homelessness. The Mayors reported that demand for hunger relief services grew 14 percent last year. Additionally, 21 percent of requests for emergency food are estimated to have gone unmet. This is the highest rate of unmet need by emergency food providers since the recession of the early 1990s. And this is not just a problem of the inner cities. According to the Census Bureau, hunger and poverty are growing faster in the suburbs than anywhere else in America. In my own state of Vermont, one in ten people is "food insecure," according to government statistics. That is, of course, just a clinical way to say they are hungry or at risk of hunger.

Under the leadership of Deborah Flateman, the Vermont Food Bank in South Barre distributes food to approximately 240 private social service agencies throughout the state to help hungry and needy Vermonters. Just last week, the thousands of Vermonters who receive food from the Food Bank came perilously close to finding out what life would be like without its support, when the roof of the Food Bank's main warehouse collapsed. Though the warehouse was destroyed, the need for food was not, and the Vermont Food Bank is continuing its operation while being temporarily housed in a former nursing home. I applaud the efforts of Deborah and all of the workers and volunteers of the Food Bank who are persevering over this huge obstacle and are keeping food on the table for many hungry Vermonters.

The local food shelves and emergency kitchens which receive food from the Vermont Food Bank clearly are on the front-line against hunger. And what they are seeing is very disturbing—one in four seeking hunger relief is a child under the age of 17. Elderly people make up more than a third of all emergency food recipients. We cannot continue to allow so many of our youngest and oldest citizens face the prospect of hunger on a daily basis.

Perhaps the most troubling statistic about hunger in Vermont is that in 45 percent of the households that receive charitable food assistance, one or more adults are working. Nationwide, working poor households represent more than one-third of all emergency food recipients. These are people in