

In our fast-paced global and highly technical environment, where time is money, companies transacting business across state lines need assurance that electronically signed documents are fully and legally executable. Senator ABRAHAM's Millennium Digital Commerce Act will ensure that businesses located in different states are held to their agreements and obligations even if their respective states have different rules and approaches concerning electronically signed documents.

This much needed and timely legislation is a necessary precursor to state-by-state adoption of the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA). Once UETA is finalized, its enactment by all fifty states is not expected to occur for several years.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act is an important interim step towards eventual national uniformity. It merely establishes the legal certainty of electronic signatures when used for interstate business transactions. It strikes a necessary balance between a state's individual interests and the need for reciprocity among and between states. It fosters the expansion of trade on a state-wide, national, and international basis while promoting continued innovation.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act is technology neutral and allows businesses to determine the methods they want to utilize for executing an online transaction. This legislation also establishes guiding principles for the use of electronic signatures for international transactions. A framework based on open, non-discriminatory standards. Lastly, Senator ABRAHAM's bill requires federal agencies to identify rules or regulations that impede electronic commerce and recommendations for improvements.

Mr. President, the United States cannot lag behind our industrial trading partners. Already, the United Kingdom has called for the legal recognition of electronic signatures.

I look forward to working with Senator ABRAHAM and Chairman MCCAIN as the Commerce Committee gives prompt consideration to this important pro-technology, pro-electronic commerce legislation.

The Millennium Digital Commerce Act will help move our nation's economy forward into the 21st Century. I hope the rest of my colleagues will support this responsible measure which will benefit both American consumers and American businesses.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, April 12, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,663,866,732,410.23 (Five trillion, six hundred sixty-three billion, eight hundred sixty-six million, seven hundred thirty-two thousand, four hundred ten dollars and twenty-three cents).

Five years ago, April 12, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,565,109,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred sixty-five billion, one hundred nine million).

Ten years ago, April 12, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,771,368,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred seventy-one billion, three hundred sixty-eight million).

Fifteen years ago, April 12, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,486,599,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred eighty-six billion, five hundred ninety-nine million).

Twenty-five years ago, April 12, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$473,967,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-three billion, nine hundred sixty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,189,899,732,410.23 (Five trillion, one hundred eighty-nine billion, eight hundred ninety-nine million, seven hundred thirty-two thousand, four hundred ten dollars and twenty-three cents) during the past 25 years.

RETIREMENT OF RON KAVULICK

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess for the Easter/Spring break, a member of the Senate family ended his Senate career. Ron Kavulick, the Chief Reporter of Debates, retired.

As a matter of fact, Ron was to have ended his Senate career at the close of the 105th Congress, but remained in his position as the Senate conducted the impeachment trial of the President. Ron's expertise and dedication to detail were needed throughout the tedious proceedings of the trial.

Ron became an Official Reporter of Senate Debates in 1979 and served ably in that capacity until he was elevated to the position of Chief Reporter in 1995.

Ron has a very impressive reporting background. He was an official court reporter in the Air Force's JAG office. While employed with Alderson Reporting Company, Ron had the opportunity to work at the White House. Ron traveled extensively both with President Johnson and President Nixon.

Ron spent many hours and many nights working in the West Wing of the White House providing official White House transcripts of state dinners, press conferences and news briefings. Certainly Ron's experiences at the White House were helpful as he endured many a late night in the Senate.

My staff and I personally cannot thank Ron enough for his service. Since my arrival at the Senate in 1987, I have relied on Ron's institutional memory and unfailing kindness. He has always been available, day or night, for any help that my staff or I needed. It would be impossible for me to count the times that Ron and his very able staff have assisted us. Having said that, no one deserves a rest from the

long, sometimes grueling hours of the Senate more than Ron Kavulick. I can attest to the fact that he will be greatly missed here in the Senate.

As Ron goes on to enjoy time with his wife, Pat, his children and granddaughter, Allison, I thank him for his diligence and perseverance in his service to his country and for his friendship to us here in the Senate. My staff joins me in wishing him all the best in the years to come.

Ron, good luck and Godspeed.

TRIBUTE TO ISABEL "BELLA" ROMERO

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a truly remarkable woman, Mrs. Isabel "Bella" Romero, of Greeley, Colorado. This gallant woman's life was prematurely cut short last year after courageously fighting ovarian cancer for six years. Bella's dedication to improving our world transcends her career as an inspirational middle school principal and educator and as a woman devoted to her family. Her selfless pursuit of bringing out the best in all she came in contact with has made her passing that much greater. She is fondly missed by her friends and family, but her legacy lives on through all those whose lives she touched.

I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Denver Post on this remarkable Coloradan be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Denver Post, Mar. 25, 1999]

BELLA ROMERO'S LIFE DISPLAYED THE
ELOQUENCE OF ACTION
(By Tomás Romero)

"In our world of big names, curiously, our heroes tend to be anonymous."—Historian Daniel J. Boorstin

Americans tend to compartmentalize their emotions too much: Feeling patriotic on July 4, remembering the deceased on Memorial Day and putting on a happy face for the holidays.

Hispanics, though, see tragedy and joy as part of an ever-intertwined continuum—so why not acknowledge them concurrently as we do with *Los Dias de Los Muertos*? Thus, just before Christmas, I've chosen to write a belated tribute to one of those anonymous heroes described by Boorstin. After all, what time could be better to celebrate a woman who gave so many gifts to so many people?

My friend Isabel "Bella" Romero of Greeley died this year after an unbelievably valiant six-year battle fought against a cruel, unforgiving foe—ovarian cancer.

Action is eloquence. And the eloquently lovely manner with which Bella Romero conducted her life journey must be remembered: an unmatched, deliberately executed, constantly positive pattern for living.

She was a loving wife to Ray, a loving mother to Denny, Mark, Juan and Andrea, and a passionate advocate for every school child in need of a good past. As a Longmont middle school principal, Bella knew that a child without a good past couldn't easily aspire to a better future.