

regarding the Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. JEFFORDS. 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 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, April 21, 1999, in open session, to review the readiness of the United States Navy and Marines operating forces.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 21, 1999, at 2 p.m. on the technology administration FY/2000 Budget.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEA POWER

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Seapower be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 21, 1999, at 2:30 p.m., in open session, to receive testimony on ship acquisition programs and policy.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, FEDERALISM AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Federalism and Property Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, be authorized to hold an executive business meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 21, 1999, at 2 p.m., in room 226 of the Senate Dirksen Office Building.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

GRASSLEY-TORRICELLI HEALTH CARE BANKRUPTCY BILL

• Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, it is an unfortunate result of today's modern health care system that many health care providers face serious financial difficulties. Increasingly, these health care providers are filing for the protection of the bankruptcy system. This reality was demonstrated recently in New Jersey where the parent company of the HIP Health Care Plan went bankrupt, leaving the plan's 194,000 subscribers in health care limbo.

The bankruptcy system, for all of the benefits it provides to debtors, credi-

tors and the public, does little to protect patients of insolvent health care providers. These patients have no choice when their provider files for bankruptcy, they are, quite literally, innocent victims. In some cases such as the HIP HMO in New Jersey, state insurance commissioners have stepped in to manage failing providers. However, such steps will not always be possible, and in those cases patients must have adequate protections. Furthermore, this bill applies not only to HMOs, but also to hospitals, nursing homes, and long term care providers.

Senator GRASSLEY and I have worked diligently to craft a fair bankruptcy bill that addresses the true problems of the bankruptcy system. We believe that the increasing frequency of health care bankruptcy and the problems it creates for patients is a serious problem that deserves to be addressed in our bankruptcy reform effort.

Our bill would create several important patient protections. It would provide for the appointment of an ombudsman to monitor and assure continued quality of the care being provided to patients. The bill would set up procedures to ensure that the confidentiality of patient records is strictly maintained as a health care provider closes its operation.

Our legislation would also raise the priority in bankruptcy of the costs associated with closing a health care business. Those costs are often incurred by state agencies, and thus the taxpayers. Finally, the bill would require a bankruptcy trustee to use best efforts to transfer patients to alternative providers when a health care business fails.

The reality of today's health care system is that there will inevitably be providers who fall upon financial difficulties and seek the protection of the bankruptcy system. Given that reality, we must take the steps today to ensure that the patients of these providers have adequate protections. ●

BILL MCSWEENEY

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, since coming to Washington, Marcelle and I have had an opportunity to meet very special people who have become special friends. Among those are Bill and Dorothy McSweeney.

A great regret I had was having to miss Bill's surprise 70th birthday party recently, but it showed the genius of Dorothy that she was able to keep it a secret. That so many turned out shows a great respect for this multi-faceted man—people across the political spectrum and including some of the best representatives of arts and entertainment. It definitely reflected all of his background.

I would ask unanimous consent that an article in Monday, March 15th Washington Post be included in the RECORD at this point.

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

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 15, 1999]

A FULL-BLOWN SURPRISE FOR BILL MCSWEENEY'S BIRTHDAY, 70 CANDLES AND 200 FRIENDS

(By Roxanne Roberts)

Some men think birthdays are depressing. Some think getting older is preferable to the alternative, but nonetheless annoying. Then there are the few, the happy few, who think each birthday is a passport to wonderful new opportunities.

"The great thing about being 70 is that you get to kiss all the beautiful ladies," said Bill McSweeney with only a slightly wicked grin. "When you're 70, you don't look dangerous. Little do they know."

The local businessman, arts advocate and community leader was the guest of honor at a surprise party Friday night at Ford's Theatre. What started out as a small gathering for family ballooned into a celebration with more than 200 friends and longtime fans. Everyone was sworn to not drop a single, solitary hint—and judging by the look at McSweeney's face when he walked into the theater, they succeeded.

"Who said people couldn't keep secrets in Washington?" said his wife, Dorothy.

This was no small feat, considering the guest list included the likes of Mayor Anthony Williams, former mayor Marion Barry, Education Secretary Richard Riley, Dorothy Height, Veterans Affairs Secretary Togo West, comedian Mark Russell, WJLA anchor Paul Berry, talk show host Diane Rehm, NASA administrator Dan Goldin, media moguls Arnaud de Borchgrave and Phil Merrill, and former FBI director Bill Sessions. The crowd was full of prominent Washingtonians—LaSalle Leffall, John Hechinger, Esther Coopersmith, Marshall Coyne, Peggy Cafritz and Frankie Hewitt, to name a few—a testament to McSweeney's lifelong involvement with his adopted home town.

"I met him more than 40 years ago and we've been friends ever since," said Height, the president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women. "He's so genuine. And in addition to everything else, he's lots of fun."

"When you think about people who have done something for the community, you think about Bill," said Leffall. "He's always been there."

McSweeney, former president of Occidental International, has spent most of his life trying to make Washington a better place to live. He was crucial in reopening Ford's Theatre and has served on the boards of the Kennedy Center, Folger Shakespeare Theatre and Helen Hayes Awards. He's been a longtime advocate for the D.C. schools, housing and inner-city youth, and a key fundraiser for the Lombardi Cancer Center and other charities.

"Bill is a real inspiration for this city," Williams said. "I think he's a real role model for every American citizen to contribute to Washington, D.C."

"I think Bill McSweeney is one of God's special people on Earth," said Cora Masters Barry.

They like him. They really, really like him. So his wife and friends wanted to do something special for his 70th birthday this month.

Problem was that the birthday boy already had decided how he was going to celebrate. McSweeney made a deal with his wife to bring their four children and grandchildren down to Mexico for two weeks. The official birthday is March 31, and he planned to scuba-