THE AMERICAN RED CROSS NATIONAL BLOOD APPEAL

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, we are currently facing one of the worst blood shortages in history, and I implore the citizens of this fine nation to volunteer to be a blood donor. Across the country hospitals are having to postpone life saving operations because of the lack of blood. Just the other day, the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston had to postpone a liver transplant because it lacked the necessary blood supply to perform the surgery. This is simply not acceptable.

On September 19, 2000, Dr. Bernadine Healy, president and CEO of the American Red Cross, made the following statement stressing the critical need for blood donations. I feel that it is essential that we heed Dr. Healy's advice, and I ask unanimous consent that her statement be printed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT BY DR. BERNADINE HEALY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2000, AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD SUPPLY PRESS CONFERENCE

At this moment, the nation's blood supply is in critically short supply. We could not practice modern medicine without blood. Right now, the medical care of patients is being altered, postponed or canceled because the blood they need is not available. This silent savior in many medical emergencies is in short supply.

Blood is a critical link in the chain of health care nationwide. Together, the American Red Cross and the hundreds of independent blood centers maintain the strength of that link providing blood to patients in need. But that link is weak, and the chain of caring is being stretched to its limit.

Our role as blood bankers is an important one and we take our responsibilities very seriously. Every donor provides a generous gift of life and we recognize that gift as part of a precious national resource. We are now facing a time when the demand for this resource has grown such that it is outpacing our ability to provide adequate supplies.

In August 1999, the Red Cross collected about 16,700 units of blood per day. In August 2000, we collected nearly 17,300 units of blood daily—an increase of 3 percent. However, while collections have increased, so too has distribution. In August 1999, we distributed more than 14,700 units of blood each day. In August 2000, we distributed nearly 17,000 units each day, a 14 percent increase for that one month.

The American Red Cross believes we need a three-day inventory available—about 80,000 units—which enables us to provide an uninterrupted supply of blood to patients in need. However, for the entire summer, the Red Cross has operated on little more than a two-day supply.

Last Friday, our national inventory plummeted to 36,000 units of blood, and we consider 50,000 units to be a critical inventory level. Thirty-four of our thirty-six blood regions nationwide are in urgent need of blood donations. Many of our regions are being forced to ask local hospitals to postpone elective surgeries, especially if the patient in question has type 0 blood because the demand is greatest for this type.

An increase in the population, aging, growing numbers of medical procedures and more complex surgeries that were not possible years ago have contributed to this increase in demand. Patient undergoing chemotherapy and infants in neonatal care need blood. So do accident victims and those undergoing transplants. Blood is always, everywhere in need.

The American Red Cross is implementing increased donor recruitment initiatives to help offset these trends including:

1. Scheduling more blood drives, as well as expanding the hours of existing blood drives;
2. Pilot-testing an Internet-based system to enable people to schedule blood donation appointment online;
3. Utilizing aggressive telemarketing and direct-mail campaigns to encourage previous blood donors to come back and schedule an appointment;
4. Paying for advertising and working with the news media in markets nationwide to get this critical message to potential donors;
5. Establishing a pilot ''urban blood donor center'' in Chicago to make it easier for people working in downtown areas to donate blood during the business day.

We are excited about these new efforts and hope that they will allow us to reach more prospective donors than ever before. However, the fact remains that we need help now to address the current blood shortage. I want to encourage everyone, from students returning to school, to people who haven't donated blood in a while to call 1–800–GIVE–LIFE today to schedule an appointment. We need you now. Don't forget, 1–800–GIVE–LIFE.

THE HAGUE CONVENTION ON PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, countless Americans will welcome the news that the Senate last night ratified the Treaty of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. This Treaty was approved by our Foreign Relations Committee in April.

In addition, the Senate also approved unanimous final passage of the Intercountry Adoption Implementation Act—which was likewise unanimously approved by the House of Representatives this past Monday.

I offered the Intercountry Adoption Implementation act a year ago—along with Senator LANDRIEU, because this legislation will provide, for the first time, a rational structure for intercountry adoption.

Mr. President, this significant legislation is intended to build some accountability into agencies that provide intercountry adoption services in the United States while strengthening the hand of the Secretary of State in ensuring that U.S. adoption agencies engage in an ethical manner to find homes for children.

In addition, Mr. President, both the Senate and the House agreed that sole responsibility for implementing the requirements of the Hague Convention, rests with the U.S. Secretary of State. Although, some advocated early on, a role for various government agencies, I believe that spreading responsibility among various agencies would have undermined the effective implementation of the Hague Convention.

Mr. President, passage of this significant legislation would not have been possible without the assistance from several talented people in both the Senate and House.

In particular, of course, I extend my sincere appreciation to Senator LANDRIEU (and her staff). Senator LANDRIEU and I have worked together on issues of adoption since her arrival in the Senate in 1997.

Senator BIDEN, ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee, has been exceedingly helpful (as has his staff) in finalizing the Intercountry Adoption Implementation Act.

It's always a privilege to work with our colleagues in the House—and especially regarding passage of this Act. The Honorable BILL GILMAN, the distinguished chairman of the House International Relations Committee; Congressman SAM GEJDENSON, ranking minority member on the House International Relations; Congressmen DAVE CAMP and WILLIAM DELAHUNT; and, last but by no means least, my good friend, Congressman RICHARD BURR—who offered the original Senate companion bill in the House.

From my own Senate family, the former legislative counsel for the Foreign Relations Committee (now counsel for Senate Intelligence), Patricia McNerney; and Michele DeKonty, the very special lady who, in every sense, my right-hand lady.

Mr. President, this legislation now goes to President Clinton. I am hopeful that ratification and implementation of the Hague Convention will encourage more intercountry adoptions, while protecting all who are involved in the process.

DELAYS IN SENATE CONFIRMATION OF JUDICIAL NOMINEES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I regret to report to the Senate that the last confirmation hearing for federal judges held by the Judiciary Committee was in July. Throughout August and now into the third week in September, there have been no additional hearings held or even noticed. By contrast, in 1992, the last year of the Bush Administration, a Democratic majority in the Senate held three confirmation hearings in August and September and continued to work to confirm judges up to and including the last day of the session.

I also regret that the Judiciary Committee's inaction on judicial nominations has led to Senators object to Senate committees continuing to meet on other matters when the Senate is in session. The matter is most acute with regard to the numerous vacancies on our Courts of Appeals and the qualified women and men who have been stalled before this Committee.