

racial and ethnic boundaries on a daily basis. I have no doubt that as America's Hispanic American community grows, it will maintain the legacy that it has built while also adding a new chapter to its rich history as an important piece of the American mosaic.

TIRE STANDARDS

Mr. ASHCROFT. I would like to engage in a brief colloquy with Senator MCCAIN the Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. Yesterday, the Senate took an important step forward in improving our nation's motor vehicle safety laws. One of the most important aspects of that bill was a provision to require Department of Transportation to upgrade the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard for tires for the first time in nearly 30 years.

Because it has been so long since the standards have been revised, they do not apply to tires used on sport utility vehicles (SUVs). In fact, SUVs weren't even around when these standards were last developed. Given the relationship of tires to the rollover propensity of SUVs, I would expect that the Department should first upgrade the standards for those tires used on SUVs. In addition, since the tire standard was put in place technology for the construction and design of tires has improved dramatically. For example, nylon ply caps can significantly improve the performance of tires. The types vehicles on the road has also changed as more and more people choose to drive sport utility vehicles. Chairman MCCAIN would you agree that the Department should consider new technologies that would improve tire safety as they establish the new tire standard and that they should also consider the different mix of vehicles on the road as they set their priorities for implementing the new standard.

Mr. MCCAIN. I concur with the Senator from Missouri that a variety of new technologies are available to improve the design and construction of tires. The improved federal motor vehicle safety standard for tires should take into account all of these new technologies to ensure that consumers are provided with safe tires. Additionally, the Department should implement the rule in light of the changing mix of types of vehicles that consumers are driving.

Mr. ASHCROFT. Well, I thank the Chairman for taking the time to answer my questions and the hard work he has done to get a bill passed this year.

FREIGHT RAIL TRANSPORTATION

• Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, today I am addressing the Senate to express my view on a vital part of our Nation's transportation infrastructure—the freight railroads.

I am aware of concerns that have been raised by some companies that ship by rail about the service and rates available to them. Certainly, the ability to safely, economically and efficiently transport raw materials to plants and finished products to both domestic and international consumers is as critical as the actual production of these commodities and goods.

Since 1827 with the founding of the Nation's first commercial railroad, the B&O, we have depended on the rails to perform this function. In its heyday, the iron horse dominated transportation of goods and passengers. Today, after surviving nearly total collapse in the 1970s, a streamlined, modernized rail industry continues to play a role, albeit a considerably downsized one, in the transportation marketplace. Our transportation infrastructure has evolved—now trucks on the interstate highways are by far the predominant mode of transportation, and inland barges carry coal and grain on our nation's waterways.

As many of you know, I have always been interested in rail history. Indeed, Atlanta was originally known as Terminus because of the railroads which were sited there. What history has taught us is that the rails require a continuing, massive capital investment to operate safely. In the late 1970s, Congress faced the dilemma of a severely under-capitalized system with a dismal safety performance. The rails would have to be supported by massive federal subsidy or freed to compete in the marketplace in an effort to generate needed capital. Congress wisely chose the latter course, and the railroads have been able to generate the quarter trillion dollars needed since 1980 to support the infrastructure. In 1999 alone, the private investment was \$16.2 billion, with \$2.87 of assets needed for every dollar of revenue produced. The industry's vastly improved safety record in large part is a testament to the wisdom of that infrastructure investment. Let me add that although progress in this area has been significant, nevertheless this safety record can be further improved. It is my hope that management and labor will work together toward that end.

The world is not perfect, of course, and in the intervening years issues have arisen which must be addressed—issues such as the need to honor the hard earned collective bargaining agreements of railroad workers. Many of these issues have been brought to the attention of Congress, the Interstate Commerce Commission and now its successor, the Surface Transportation Board, STB. Indeed, the Congress took a comprehensive look at rail regulation in 1995 when it created the STB. I know some companies believe their rail rates are excessive. While rates have declined more than 50 percent since 1981, some customers have

benefitted more than others, reflecting the differential pricing put into place by the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. This has led in part to complaints being heard from segments of the shipping public. Many have suffered from service disruptions following recent mergers and consolidations. While I am very concerned about these situations, I believe the STB has worked within its mandate to address them.

I have an open mind on whether these matters need to be examined further. If that is the case, I urge that we move carefully. We should not return to the very regulatory schemes that led to near disaster a generation ago. I would not favor policies that deprive the railroads of their ability to generate capital, resulting in the federal government—rather than the private sector—having to assume the costs of maintaining and operating the freight rail network.●

TRIBUTE TO LT. BOB DOUGLAS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding Kentuckian, Lt. Bob Douglas (ret.).

For almost 30 years, Bob has crusaded against the scourge of drugs and served the people of Kentucky, helping to make the Commonwealth a safer place to live.

Bob worked for 25 years as a member of the Erlanger, Kentucky Police Department. For the last nine of those years, he was the primary instructor for the anti-drug program, D.A.R.E. When Bob retired from the police force in 1998, he became the Executive Director of the Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition. He is also a new member of the steering committee of the National Crime Prevention Council.

For his efforts, Bob was recently presented with a 2000 Mac Gray Award for his outstanding effort to promote the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign. The award recognizes those who have made extraordinary contributions and pledged personal commitment to work with the media to promote anti-drug public service announcements and crime prevention education.

Some have kidded Bob about the Columbo-style overcoat he wears. But like Peter Falk's character, Bob gets results. For years, he visited children in schools to teach them about the dangers of drugs and to urge them to stay out of trouble. With his partner, the canine character, Officer McGruff, there is no doubt that Bob made an impression and steered more than a few children in the right direction.

Too often we hear about our problems and the trouble-makers in society, and we don't hear enough about our heroes and the everyday citizens who make a difference and improve our quality of life. Bob Douglas is one of those heroes, and he deserves our commendation.