

with her on issues of vital importance to workers and their families. I hope that under her able leadership, the Department of Labor will be at the forefront of improving the lives of the nation's workers and their families, by ensuring that they have good jobs, good wages and safe and healthy places to work.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am thrilled that we are today confirming Elaine Chao as Secretary of Labor. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Employment, Safety and Training and a member of the Small Business Committee, I am very concerned about making sure all businesses in this country, even the very smallest, are able to understand the thousands of regulations they must follow and get the help they need to follow them. I know Secretary Chao shares these concerns and I look forward to working with her on these issues.

I am also extremely excited about the managerial and administrative experience Ms. Chao brings to the Department. It is so important that we have good administrative processes in the Department of Labor. The decisions of this Department deeply affect both our nations' workers and the businesses that provide jobs and incomes and help our economy grow. It is absolutely critical that both workers and employers feel that these decisions are not arbitrary and are reached in a fair and impartial manner.

I firmly believe Secretary Chao has the experience and skills to inspire confidence in the fairness of the Department's actions, regardless of their popularity. This is a crucial responsibility of the Secretary of Labor, and I believe Secretary Chao has been well trained to fulfill this responsibility. I look forward to helping Secretary Chao with this task, and I welcome my fellow members from both sides of the aisle to join us in this effort. I hope that together during this Congress we can take a careful and close look at some of the existing regulatory and enforcement procedures that Secretary Chao will inherit. We must ensure that good procedures are followed properly, and we must change procedures that are not working.

I also look forward to working with Secretary designate Chao to bring the Department of Labor into the 21st Century. We are in a very exciting time of more positive relationships between employees and employers. In this period of record unemployment, employers have learned the lesson that it makes good business sense to keep employees healthy and happy. In order to encourage this progress, we must ensure that our Department of Labor does not thwart the development of workplace arrangements and initiatives that benefit both employee and employer. This will take modern, innovative thinking and I am confident that Secretary Chao is such a thinker.

I think the President made a wonderful choice when he nominated Elaine Chao to be Labor Secretary, and I am so glad the Senate has demonstrated equal wisdom by confirming her quickly. I look forward to working closely with Secretary Chao and the Department on all the many challenging workplace issues.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for Ms. Elaine Chao to be Secretary of Labor.

This Nation can be no stronger than the men and women who get up everyday and accept the challenges to go out into the workplace and return home to care for their families, themselves, and their neighborhoods. The Secretary of Labor's responsibility is to look out for the welfare of these men and women across our country. I am confident that Ms. Chao will be a great champion of these individuals, and I commend President Bush on selecting such an excellent nominee.

Ms. Chao brings to this important position a record of accomplishment both in the private and public sectors. Among other positions, Ms. Chao has served as president of the United Way, Director of the Peace Corps, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation, and Chairman of the Federal Maritime Administration. Her experience as an executive and experience in finding solutions to complex problems with limited budgets, gives her a solid foundation to lead the Labor Department.

I have personally known Ms. Chao for a number of years. I was honored to be present at her confirmation hearing before the Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, of which I am now once again a member. Throughout her career, Ms. Chao has accepted the challenges that have confronted her and pursued her responsibilities with firmness, fairness, and always with a quiet dignity.

Ms. Chao will be a great leader at the Department of Labor, and I look forward to voting in support of her nomination.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to proceed, if I may, under the order. I believe this time is allotted to us.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

#### NOMINATION OF GALE NORTON

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we were talking about confirmation of appointments. Among the next ones that will take place tomorrow will be the Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton. I want to spend a little time talking

about the Secretary, but perhaps more as a preliminary matter, I want to talk about the importance of Federal lands and the impact they have on the West in particular. Of course, they are national lands.

First of all, I am very hopeful and confident that Gale Norton will be confirmed. I think she has done an excellent job in responding to the legitimate questions she has been asked. That is the role of the Senate: to inquire, ask questions of these aspiring nominees. She has done, I believe, an excellent job of responding.

She is a superb candidate for this job. She has experience. She has experience as attorney general of the State of Colorado, during which time, of course, she had to deal with a good many land, water, and air quality issues and I think dealt with them professionally.

She is knowledgeable, certainly, about the West. The West is unique—I will talk about that in a moment—where, in many cases, more than half of a State belongs to the Federal Government. It is very important to all of us.

Gale Norton has a background in land use and park use, not only from her experience in Colorado but also her experience in the Interior Department as an associate solicitor for the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as the Park Service. I have had some occasions to talk with her as chairman of the parks subcommittee.

I certainly have an interest in this job in that this Secretary has jurisdiction over the National Park System. She is certainly a conservative conservationist. We have sometimes gotten into the position where those things seem to be an oxymoron; they seem to be conflicting. Indeed, it seems to me they are not.

She is a conservative and I am a conservative, but we are conservationists in that we want to protect the resources so they will be there in the future for our kids and future youngsters. These two things are not incompatible. Under most definitions, they would be quite compatible. I would substitute conservationist—at least to some we have to be an environmentalist. That perhaps is another step.

In any event, I do believe Gale Norton will be confirmed as Secretary, and I certainly support her nomination. I do want to talk about public lands, since we have some time today.

In my State of Wyoming, nearly 50 percent of the land belongs to the Federal Government in various categories. Some was set aside for national parks. We have two of the most famous national parks, Yellowstone and Grand Tetons. We also have Devils Tower and other facilities as well. Some of the land was set aside for U.S. forests. Much of the land, on the other hand, is BLM land, which really was remaining