Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nominations of Ellen G. Engelman to be Administrator of the Research and Special Programs Administration at the Department of Transportation, and Kirk Van Tine the General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, and they be placed on the Executive Calendar.

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

NOMINATION OF JOHN W. GILLIS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nomination of John W. Gillis to be Director of the Office of Victims of Crime; that the nominations be considered and confirmed on an expedited basis. I noted that Attorney General Ashcroft had, on the eve of the nomination hearing, called me at home in support of this nomination. Yesterday I requested that the Majority Leader move to close the Senate in order that the Senate confirm John Gillis. I thank the Majority Leader for taking action and I want to thank all Democratic Members of the Senate and my colleague from Vermont for approving that request. In these difficult days, confirming Mr. Gillis to head the Office for Victims of Crime so that he may lend his hand to the efforts of those working so diligently in that Office and in state and local government and private efforts in New York, Virginia and around the country, is a small but significant step that the Senate can and should take.

I am gratified that overnight what had seemingly developed in an effort to delay Senate action on this nomination has been resolved. I thank all Senators for their willingness to move forward under these extraordinary circumstances to confirm John Gillis to be Director of the Office for Victims of Crime. In particular, I thank the senior Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES) for his effort to clear this nomination for expedited Senate action today. His personal intervention helped make this possible.

I have had the privilege of working over the years with Senator NICKLES on behalf of victims of crime and terrorism. He and I have worked on special appropriations to assist the victims of the Oklahoma bombing and special legislation to ensure their rights in connection with the trial. Last year, working with Katherine Turman, we were able to enact improvements to our 1985 legislation for victims of terrorism in order to double the cap on the Victims of Crime Act emergency reserve fund to $100 million and provide greater flexibility to the Office for Victims of Crime to use the emergency reserve in those programs that assist victims of terrorism and mass violence.

In addition, over the years I have worked with Senator SPECTER and others on a series of legislative actions to provide financial and educational benefits to federal and state public safety officers killed or injured in the line of duty, including educational benefits for their dependents.

We will be reviewing all of these provisions in the days and weeks ahead in the wake of the devastation of Tuesday.

Although nominees to head the Office for Victims of Crime traditionally have not always participated in a confirmation hearing, I announced last week that Mr. Gillis at a Senate hearing to highlight the importance of the work of this Office, the critical importance of crime victims' rights, and the assistance and compensation provided by the Federal Government.

Along with other Senators strongly committed to assisting crime victims and protecting their rights, I reintroduced the Crime Victims Assistance Act of 2001 in April of this year. In preparing our bill, we consulted closely with a number of victims' organizations and with the Office for Victims of Crime. That legislation, which enhances the rights and protections of victims of crime, establishes innovative new programs to help promote compliance with State victim rights laws and improves the manner in which the Crime Victims Fund is managed and preserved, is an important matter and a high priority for me. I was heartened when Mr. Gillis pledged to work with us on this initiative.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nominations of Bruce Cole to be the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities and of Ellen G. Engelman to be Administrator of the Research and Special Programs Administration at the Department of Transportation.

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

NOMINATION OF BRUCE COLE, OF INDIANA, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES


Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nominations of Bruce Cole to be the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities and that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from the consideration of the nomination of John W. Gillis to be Director of the Office of Victims of Crime; that the nominations be considered and confirmed on an expedited basis. I noted that Attorney General Ashcroft had, on the eve of the nomination hearing, called me at home in support of this nomination. Yesterday I requested that the Majority Leader move to close the Senate in order that the Senate confirm John Gillis. I thank the Majority Leader for taking action and I want to thank all Democratic Members of the Senate and my colleague from Vermont for approving that request. In these difficult days, confirming Mr. Gillis to head the Office for Victims of Crime so that he may lend his hand to the efforts of those working so diligently in that Office and in state and local government and private efforts in New York, Virginia and around the country, is a small but significant step that the Senate can and should take.

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