every day. Almost half the time, back in that bygone era, if you needed an
appointment to get to an ER you were SOL: severally out of luck.

The American College of Emergency Physi-
cians is certainly concerned about the problem: Last October, an advisory panel
proposed guidelines for ambulance diversion, blaming "a shortage of health care pro-
viders, limited hospital-based resources, and an ongoing hospital and ED [emergency depart-
ment] closures." But it’s easy to get the feeling
that others at the national level aren’t taking it seriously. At a public health con-
ference in November, at the beginning of the critical winter season, U.S. Surgeon General
David Satcher was quoted as recommending that people be "educated" not to go to the
emergency room unless they really need to. Dennis O’Leary, head of the Joint Commissi-
on on Accreditation of Healthcare Organiza-
tions, a critical monitoring group, was quoted as saying: "Quite frankly, this prob-
lem waxes and wanes . . . but without any-
thing tangibly happening it resolves itself . . . . The system will somehow muddle through.

They’re right: I muddle through each shift worrying about patients trapped in the wait-
ing room or ambulances that can’t discharge their passengers at the door. I mutter hum-
bly apologetic outcries, that the patients they sent in specifically for ur-
gent treatment—pain control, antibiotics, whatever—cooled their heels for hours on end.
I go home exhausted and aggravated with myself after 10 hours of juggling alternatives
as so not to put a patient into a scarce bed—
telling the patient to try a "stronger" antibiotic,
ratchet up the home respiratory treatments, take a few extra tabs of pain reliever each
day, and always be sure to follow up with your own doctor tomorrow. I wonder if
patients are going to be back in another ER
the next day because I missed their real
problems or insisted on an ineffective patch.

Doctors and nurses have a bottom line that
ultimately distinguishes us from other pro-
fessions: quality patient care. When we can’t
provide that care, we’ve failed. Our hospital
administrators and department chiefs assume
that excellent patient care is a non-nego-
tiable standard. But every winter, and increasingly at other times, the crash of the
system is the quite capitulation to these
accumulated pressures. When forced to ma-
neuver patients through an overwhelmed system, I just don’t know if I’m doing a good job any more. As a result, I
often find myself phoning the patient the
next day, checking in: “Everything okay
today?”

Many of the region’s hospitals have re-
ceived, or are negotiating for, approval for
more beds. Where more nurses will come
from is another problem. Anthony Disser,
the chief executive nurse at Fairfax, says the intrinsic value of nursing is already luring a
certain number of burned-out software writ-
ers or disappointed entrepreneurs for a sec-
ond career. Yeah, I guess we are muddling through after all.

I look forward to that “Unraveling Safety Net” meeting in Atlanta in three weeks,
where I expect to be transfixed, like the au-
diences at “Hannibal,” by the horror stories and
dire statistics of other ER docs and pub-
lic health researchers. Maybe they’ve been come up with some solutions. If they have,
I hope they haven’t been waiting till May to
share them with the rest of us.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the
close of business yesterday, Tuesday,
June 26, 2001, the Federal debt stood at
$5,656,750,181,308.17, five trillion, six
hundred fifty-six billion, seven hundred
hundred fifty million, eight billion, eighty-
one thousand, three hundred eight dollars
and seventeen cents.

One year ago, June 26, 2000, the Fed-
eral debt stood at $5,647,619,000,000, five
trillion, six hundred forty-seven billion,
six billion nineteen million.

Five years ago, June 26, 1996, the Fed-
eral debt stood at $5,118,149,000,000,
five trillion, one hundred eighty-six billion,
hundred forty-nine million.

Ten years ago, June 26, 1991, the Fed-
eral debt stood at $3,509,901,000,000,
three trillion, five hundred billion,
hundred one million.

Fifteen years ago, June 26, 1986, the Federal debt stood at $2,040,983,000,000,
two trillion, forty billion, nine hundred
eighty-three million, three hundred
sixty-six dollars.

DEATH OF ROBERT MCKINNEY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, ear-
lier today I sent a letter to the oldest
daily newspaper in the West, “The New
Mexican” regarding the death of its
publisher, Robert McKinney.

Robert McKinney was well known to
the Senate. His decades of service to this
country, in one capacity or an-
other, and his remarkable career in
business and publishing brought him in
contact with many of us, and with
colleagues who have preceded us in this
body. He and Clinton Anderson, late a
Senator for New Mexico, were great
friends, and worked together on the
San Juan-Chama water project for our
State.

Five presidents called on him for
service from Harry Truman through
Richard Nixon. He put his prodigious
skills to work at various times at the
Department of the Interior, the Atomic
Energy Commission, and the Depart-
ment of the Treasury. Under President
Kennedy, he served as our Ambassador
to Switzerland.

He was a fine citizen, and a good
friend who will be missed, but whose
influence, I know, is “a widening ripp-
le, down a long eternity.” The world
is a better place for his having lived.

I ask that my letter be printed in the
RECORD.

The letter follows:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF “THE NEW MEXICAN”

To the Editor: With so many others, I was
saddened earlier this week when word came
of the death of Robert McKinney whose
American life made him one of the world’s
distinguished citizens. When he died in New
Mexico on Sunday night, this man of the
American West had forged great successes in
business, journalism, international diplo-
macy, public service and public policy in the
century of his nineties—his "life well lived" and much of it was lived in New
Mexico where he was the deeply respected
publisher of this newspaper.

He was a singular individual with a wide-
ranging mind, vast talents, and varied inter-
ests. He brought his considerable energy to

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TIMOTHY J. RHEIN

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I rise
today to pay tribute to Timothy J.
Rhein, who recently retired after 34
years with American President Lines,
Ltd. APL is today one of the world’s
largest shipping and intermodal lines,
and a globally recognized brand,
thanks in large part to Tim Rhein’s
leadership.

I came to know Tim through his ap-
appearance before the Subcommittee
on Merchant Marine, and I can personally
attest to his commitment to merchant
shipping and his leadership in the U.S.
shipping industry. His rise to president
and chief executive officer of APL from
1995 to 1999, and then to chairman, was
marked by key decisions in a difficult
business.

He was instrumental in expanding
APL from primarily an Asia-America
business into a truly global operation.
He gained a decisive edge on his com-
petitors by embracing information
technology earlier than anyone else in
his business. He knew the numbers and
metrics of his business better than
anyone else.

He was a singular individual with a wide-
ranging mind, vast talents, and varied in-
terests. He brought his considerable energy to

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But without doubt his toughest deci-
sion was to negotiate the sale of APL
to a non-U.S. buyer, in order to protect
all of APL’s stakeholders and to pre-
sure the APL presence and brand.

APL was the oldest continuously oper-
ating shipping company in America,
and a premier US-Flag shipping com-
pany. He stuck his neck out on that
task, put his reputation on the line, and
negotiated the sale personally—and
successfully.

Tim Rhein understood his business. He
was a nimble and gutsy decision-
maker, and we in Washington will miss
his understanding and knowledge as we
continue our pursuit of a policy to pro-
mote a strong U.S. flag maritime ship-
ping presence. I hope he will continue
to avail us of his knowledge and wise
counsel.

Good luck in your retirement, Tim
Rhein.

DEATH OF ROBERT MCKINNEY