and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CLELAND, and Mr. DODD):

S. 2514. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify State and local authority to regulate the placement, construction, and modification of broadcast transmission and telecommunications facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. REID:

S. 2515. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the amount of Social Security benefits exempt from tax for single taxpayers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2516. A bill to make improvements in the operation and administration of the Federal courts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAMS:

S. 2517. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to establish a pilot program commencing in crop year 2000 for a period of 2 years in certain States to provide improved crop insurance options for producers; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MOYNIHAN:

S. 2518. A bill to enhance family life; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. BURNS):

S. 2519. A bill to promote and enhance public safety through use of 9–1–1 as the universal emergency assistance number, further deployment of wireless 9–1–1 service, support of States in upgrading 9–1–1 capabilities and related functions, encouragement of construction and operation of seamless, ubiquitous and reliable networks for personal wireless services, and ensuring access to Federal Government property for such networks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. Res. 282. A resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding social security and the budget surplus; to the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mrs. HUTCHINSON, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. CLELAND, and Mr. DODD):

S. 2514. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify State and local authority to regulate the placement, construction, and modification of broadcast transmission and telecommunications facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to continue my strong objections to proposed Federal Communications Commission rules that could rob states and communities of the authority to decide where unsightly telecommunications towers should be built.

I am one of five Senators who voted against the Telecommunications Act of 1996. One of my fears was that the will and voice of states and local communities would be muzzled if that bill became law. Unfortunately, with the passage and implementation of the Telecommunications Act, my fears have been confirmed.

Mayors and citizens in Vermont towns and in towns across this nation are outraged that they have little control over the construction of these towers. This is especially troubling when communications technology is advancing so rapidly that large towers may become obsolete.

For example, some wireless phone providers offer the older analog wireless service. That is now being replaced by digital phone service in many parts of the nation. Analog providers could provide towerless service to towns by using an array of small antennas, instead of a large tower. Phone companies prefer to build one large tower with its switching equipment because that is cheaper than the switching equipment needed to control an array of small antennas. However, if a town does not want its landscape ruined with a tower, I think the company should be required to offer service through these smaller antennas.

Second, for companies offering the ''newer'' digital wireless phone service, other technologies are eliminating the need for large towers. The Iridium Corporation will offer phone service throughout the United States in the near future that is based on more than 60 low-earth-orbit satellites. Over time, this will provide a satellite communications link from any place in the world, even where no tower-based system is available.

In areas of the United States outside the range of cellular coverage the Iridium phone will connect you directly to the Iridium satellite network. Emergency communications—911 and disaster assistance—will be greatly aided with this development.

Hospitals, ambulances and other emergency service providers will be linked together by satellite directly from a hand held phone.

The Wall Street Journal reports that this service will cost more than regular cell phone service. However, they also report that other competitors and more efficiencies of scale are likely to bring down costs over time.

In addition, I have previously discussed how the towerless PCS-Over-Cable technology provides digital cellular phone service by using small antennas rather than large towers. These small antennas can be quickly attached to existing telephone poles, lamp posts or buildings and can provide quality wireless phone service without the use of towers. This technology is cheaper than most tower technology in part because the PCS-Over-Cable wireless provider does not have to purchase land to erect large towers.

Since there are viable and reasonable alternatives to providing wireless phone service through the use of towers, I think that towns should have some say in this matter. And I think that mayors, town officials and local citizens will agree with me.

Why should a large tower be forced on a town when wireless phone service can be provided without using a tower? Indeed, many argue that towerless phone service is much better in a disaster situation. During New England's ice storm, I am told that some towers collapsed. Tornadoes, earthquakes or hurricanes can destroy large telephone towers. But satellite phone service would not be affected by these disasters. Also, the PCS-Over-Cable technology is much less likely to be out of service for large areas during a disaster as compared to wireless phone service provided by large towers.

In addition, other advances in communications technology may also make towers obsolete even faster than anticipated.

This is one reason why I am so concerned about the federal government taking away the power of local communities to control where these towers are located. When big, unsightly towers are proposed to be located in the wrong place, towns should be able to just say no. And if the rules proposed by the FCC are implemented, towns will be further marginalized and even lose their input as to where the towers are placed.

As I have said before, I do not want Vermont turned into a pincushion, with 200 foot towers indiscriminately sprouting up on every mountain and in every valley. I have heard from many Vermonters, as well as town leaders and citizens from across the country, who are justifiably afraid that they are losing control over the siting, design, and construction of telecommunications towers and related facilities. They feel that state and local concerns are being sacrificed to the interests of a small part of the telecommunications industry that uses large towers.

Today I continue in my commitment to the preservation of state and local authority. I am joined by Senators JEFFORDS, HUTCHINSON, MOYNIHAN, FEINGOLD, GREGG, MOSELEY-BRAUN, SARBANES, DODD, and CLELAND in introducing legislation which would repeal the authority of the FCC to preempt state and local regulations affecting the placement of new telecommunications towers. This legislation expands and improves upon S. 1350, which I introduced one year ago.

Vermont communities and the state of Vermont must have a role in deciding where towers are going to go. They

must be able to take into account the protection of Vermont's scenic beauty. This is true for other states as well.

In fact, by requiring the companies to work with Vermont towns, acceptable alternative locations of towers, acceptable co-location of antennas on existing towers, or the use of alternative towerless technology, could be suggested. This would be much better than allowing any company to just come in willy-nilly and plop down towers next to our backyards.

In my view passage of this bill will actually promote better emergency phone service, better phone service in disasters and the more advanced digital wireless phone service.

The bill I am introducing today will mandate that states and towns cannot be ignored in the spread of telecommunications towers. This bill will recognize that states and towns do have choices in this cellular age.

This bill also incorporates the concerns of the aviation industry. The Federal Aviation Administration presently does not have authority to regulate the siting of towers. Airport officials work with local governments in the siting of towers. Silencing local governments will have a direct effect on airline safety, according to the representatives of the airline industry that we have heard from.

In a comment letter responding to the FCC's proposed rule, the National Association of State Aviation Officials attacked preemption on the grounds that it ''is contrary to the most fundamental principles of aviation safety * * * the proposed rule could result in the creation of hazards to aircraft and passengers at airports across the United States, as well as jeopardize safety on the ground.'' I cannot think of anyone who would want towers constructed irrespective of the negative and potentially dangerous impacts they may have on airplane flight and landing patterns.

Make no mistake. I am for progress, but not for ill-considered, so-called progress at the expense of Vermont families, towns and homeowners. Vermont can protect its rural and natural beauty while still providing for the amazing opportunities offered by these technological advances.

To deprive states of the ability to protect their land from unsightly towers is wrong, and the FCC rules should not stand. My legislation would reaffirm that states have a role to play in where telecommunications towers are placed and providing alternates to wireless providers.

I ask unanimous consent that this new legislation be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2514

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The placement of commercial telecommunications, radio, or television towers near homes can greatly reduce the value of such homes, destroy the views from such homes, and reduce substantially the desire to live in such homes.

(2) States and localities should be able to exercise control over the siting and modification of such towers through the use of zoning, planned growth, and other controls relating to the protection of the environment and public safety.

(3) There are alternatives to the construction of towers to meet telecommunications and broadcast needs, including the co-location of antennae on existing towers or structures, towerless PCS-Over-Cable telephone service, satellite television systems, low-Earth orbit satellite communication networks, and other alternative technologies.

(4) There are alternative methods of designing towers to meet telecommunications and broadcast needs, including the use of small towers that do not require blinking aircraft safety lights, break skylines, or protrude above tree canopies and that are camouflaged or disguised to blend with their surroundings, or both.

(5) On August 19, 1997, the Federal Communications Commission issued a proposed rule, MM Docket No. 97–182, which would preempt the application of State and local zoning and land use ordinances regarding the placement of broadcast transmission facilities. It is in the interest of the Nation that the Commission not adopt this rule.

(6) It is in the interest of the Nation that the memoranda opinions and orders and proposed rules of the Commission with respect to application of certain ordinances to the placement of such towers (WT Docket No. 97–192, ET Docket No. 93–62, RM–8577, and FCC 97–303, 62 F.R. 47960) be modified in order to permit State and local governments to exercise their zoning and land use authorities, and their power to protect public health and safety, to regulate the placement of telecommunications or broadcast towers and to place the burden of proof in civil actions, and in actions before the Commission relating to the placement of such towers, on the person or entity that seeks to place, construct, or modify such towers.

(7) PCS-Over-Cable or satellite telecommunications systems, including low-Earth orbit satellites, offer a significant opportunity to provide so-called ''911'' emergency telephone service throughout much of the United States.

(8) According to the Comptroller General, the Commission does not consider itself a health agency and turns to health and radiation experts outside the Commission for guidance on the issue of health effects of radio frequency exposure.

(9) The Federal Aviation Administration does not have the authority to regulate the siting of personal wireless telephone or broadcast transmission towers near airports or high-volume air traffic areas such as corridors of airspace or commonly used flyways. The Commission's proposed rules to preempt State and local zoning and land-use restrictions for the siting of such towers will have a serious negative impact on aviation safety, airport capacity and investment, and the efficient use of navigable airspace.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are as follows:

(1) To repeal certain limitations on State and local authority regarding the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service towers and related facilities as such limitations arise under section 332(c)(7) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(c)(7)).

(2) To permit State and local governments—

(A) in cases where the placement, construction, or modification of personal wireless service telephone and broadcast towers and other facilities is inconsistent with State and local requirements or decisions, to require the use of alternative telecommunication or broadcast technologies when such alternative technologies are available; and

(B) to regulate the placement of such towers so that their location or modification will not interfere with the safe and efficient use of public airspace or otherwise compromise or endanger public safety.

SEC. 2. STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY OVER PLACEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MODIFICATION OF BROADCAST TRANSMISSION AND OTHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES.

(a) REPEAL OF LIMITATIONS ON REGULATION OF PERSONAL WIRELESS FACILITIES.—Section 332(c)(7)(B) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(c)(7)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''thereof—'' and all that follows through the end and inserting ''thereof shall not unreasonably discriminate among providers of functionally equivalent services.'';

(2) by striking clause (iv);

(3) by redesignating clause (v) as clause (iv); and

(4) in clause (iv), as so redesignated—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''30 days after such action or failure to act'' and inserting ''30 days after exhaustion of any administrative remedies with respect to such action or failure to act''; and

(B) by striking the third sentence and inserting the following: ''In any such action in which a person seeking to place, construct, or modify a tower facility is a party, such person shall bear the burden of proof.''.

(b) PROHIBITION ON ADOPTION OF RULE REGARDING PREEMPTION OF STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY OVER BROADCAST TRANSMISSION FACILITIES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Federal Communications Commission may not adopt as a final rule the proposed rule set forth in ''Preemption of State and Local Zoning and Land Use Restrictions on Siting, Placement and Construction of Broadcast Station Transmission Facilities'', MM Docket No. 97–182, released August 19, 1997.

(c) AUTHORITY OVER PLACEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MODIFICATION OF OTHER TRANSMISSION TOWERS.—Part I of title III of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 337. STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY OVER PLACEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND MODIFICATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCAST TOWERS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, no provision of this Act may be interpreted to authorize any person to place, construct, or modify a broadcast tower or telecommunications tower in a manner that is inconsistent with State or local law, or contrary to an official decision of the appropriate State or local government entity having authority to approve, license, modify, or deny an application to place, construct, or modify a tower, if alternate technology is capable of delivering the broadcast or telecommunications signals without the use of a tower.

''(b) AUTHORITY REGARDING PRODUCTION OF SAFETY STUDIES.—No provision of this Act may be interpreted to prohibit a State or local government from—

''(1) requiring a person seeking authority to locate telecommunications facilities or broadcast transmission facilities within the jurisdiction of such government to produce—

''(A) environmental studies, engineering reports, or other documentation of the compliance of such facilities with radio frequency exposure limits established by the Commission; and

''(B) documentation of the compliance of such facilities with applicable Federal, State, and local aviation safety standards or aviation obstruction standards regarding objects effecting navigable airspace; or

''(2) refusing to grant authority to such person to locate such facilities within the jurisdiction of such government if such person fails to produce any studies, reports, or documentation required under paragraph (1).''.●

● Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am pleased to join forces with Senators LEAHY and JEFFORDS to introduce legislation which confirms that zoning decisions should be the providence of local governments, not overseen by the Federal Communications Commission through the use of preemption authority.

It has been my position for some time that the FCC does not have a role to play in local zoning, right of way management and franchising decisions. I fought hard during consideration of the Communications Act of 1996 to ensure that local governments have the right to exercise these fundamental authorities. The issues associated with the use and value of property, public and private, are most appropriately considered at the levels of government closest to the citizenry. Local governments can balance the needs of commerce and the use of property. If their judgment is subject to question, it should be reviewed by the court system. It should not be checked by a federal regulator, who is far less able to calculate the totality of a community's interest.

This legislation is needed because local governments have contended with a proposed FCC rule to preempt local authority over the placement of broadcast towers. The rule, I understand, has been withdrawn as a result of an agreement between the FCC, local and state government interests and telecommunications industry interests under the auspices of the FCC's ''Local and State Government Advisory Committee.'' This agreement provides for facilities siting guidelines and informal dispute resolution. I applaud this agreement. I believe it represents the reality that local governments, in the main, do want to work cooperatively with telecommunications providers who want to serve the residents of a community.

However, I believe that this legislation is still necessary. The FCC simply should not have the authority to preempt local zoning decisions.

I look forward to working on the progress of this bill with my co-sponsors and appreciate the opportunity to act in support of the exercise of local authority.●

By Mr. REID:

S. 2515. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the amount of Social Security benefits exempt from tax for single taxpayers; to the Committee on Finance.

SENIOR CITIZEN TAX REDUCTION ACT OF 1998

● Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I introduce legislation which will help alleviate a tax burden for senior citizens with modest incomes.

Until 1984, Federal taxes were not imposed on social security benefits. People pay taxes their whole working life for social security benefits and I do not believe that these payments should be taxed when they retire.

This legislation will help those single persons, widows and widowers with moderate incomes to keep more of their own money in their own pockets. When you responsibly plan for your retirement, you should be able to count on your government to meet its obligations under the contract you've made with social security.

Under current law, there is first, a calculation to determine whether any of your social security benefits are taxable. The base amount is $25,000 for singles and $32,000 for married persons. This base amount is figured by taking one-half of your social security benefits and adding in your other income. If you are single and the result is under $25,000, you don't pay taxes on your social security benefit. If the amount is over this base amount, then a further calculation is done to figure what portion of your social security benefit is taxable.

This further calculation determines how much of a person's benefit is taxed and the answer depends on the total amount of a person's social security benefit and their other income. Right now, if the total of one-half of your benefits and all your other income is more than $34,000 for a single person and $44,000 for married persons, up to 85% of your benefits could be taxable. My legislation increases the single amount to $44,000.

Let me give you an example of the effect my law would have. A widow has $37,000 total income consisting of $10,000 in social security benefits and $27,000 in other income. So for this widow, she adds half of her social security benefit which is $5,000 and her other income of $27,000 for a total of $32,000. Under the current law, since she has over $25,000 total income, she does the next calculation. The result is that she has to include $3,500 of her social security benefits in her adjusted gross income. Under my legislation, none of her social security benefits would be taxable.

While I realize that this may be considered a small step in removing an unfair tax burden, it is also an important first step to those seniors who have made America the greatest country in the world. I encourage the committee to give favorable consideration to our legislation.●

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2516. A bill to make improvements in the operation and administration of the Federal courts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

THE FEDERAL COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, along with my colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, I am introducing the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1998. As chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts, it is my responsibility to review federal court processes and procedures. Every two years or so, the Congress receives an official request from the Judicial Conference, the governing body of the federal courts, that include changes in the law the Judicial Conference believes is necessary to improve the functioning of the courts.

After reviewing the latest official request from the Judicial Conference, Senator DURBIN, who is the ranking member of the subcommittee, and I worked together in putting together a modification of this request to introduce as legislation. We are introducing this legislation today.

The bill contains four different titles including numerous changes in subjects such as judicial financial administration, judicial process improvements, judicial personnel administration, other personnel matters and federal public defenders. While many of these items may not be essential for the court system to operate, they will certainly help the system function better, and hopefully, more effectively.

Mr. President, it is my hope that we can consider this bill and pass it during these last few weeks of this Congress. I will work with Senator DURBIN to try and make that happen. I urge my colleagues to support us in this effort.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2516

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1998.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

TITLE I—JUDICIAL FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF JUDICIARY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FUND.

Section 612 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''equipment'' each place it appears and inserting ''resources'';

(2) by striking subsection (f) and redesignating subsequent subsections accordingly;

(3) in subsection (g), as so redesignated, by striking paragraph (3); and

(4) in subsection (i), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking ''Judiciary'' each place it appears and inserting ''judiciary'';

(B) by striking ''subparagraph (c)(1)(B)'' and inserting ''subsection (c)(1)(B)''; and

(C) by striking ''under (c)(1)(B)'' and inserting ''under subsection (c)(1)(B)''.

SEC. 102. BANKRUPTCY FEES.

Subsection (a) of section 1930 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) In districts that are not part of a United States trustee region as defined in section 581 of this title, the Judicial Conference of the United States may require the debtor in a case under chapter 11 of title 11 to pay fees equal to those imposed by paragraph (6) of this subsection. Such fees shall be deposited as offsetting receipts to the fund established under section 1931 of this title and shall remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 103. DISPOSITION OF MISCELLANEOUS FEES.

For fiscal year 1999 and thereafter, any portion of miscellaneous fees collected as prescribed by the Judicial Conference of the United States pursuant to sections 1913, 1914(b), 1926(a), 1930(b), and 1932 of title 28, United States Code, exceeding the amount of such fees in effect on September 30, 1998, shall be deposited into the special fund of the Treasury established under section 1931 of title 28, United States Code.

TITLE II—JUDICIAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE DISTRICT COURTS OF GUAM AND THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.

Section 631 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking the first two sentences of subsection (a) and inserting the following: ''The judges of each United States district court and the district courts of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands shall appoint United States magistrate judges in such numbers and to serve at such locations within the judicial districts as the Judicial Conference may determine under this chapter. In the case of a magistrate judge appointed by the district court of the Virgin Islands, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, this chapter shall apply as though the court appointing such a magistrate judge were a United States district court.''; and

(2) by inserting in the first sentence of paragraph (1) of subsection (b) after ''Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,'' the following: ''the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,''.

SEC. 202. MAGISTRATE JUDGE CONTEMPT AUTHORITY.

Section 636(e) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(e) CONTEMPT AUTHORITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A United States magistrate judge serving under this chapter shall have within the territorial jurisdiction prescribed by his or her appointment the power to exercise contempt authority as set forth in this subsection.

''(2) SUMMARY CRIMINAL CONTEMPT AUTHORITY.—A magistrate judge shall have the power to punish summarily by fine or imprisonment such contempt of his or her authority constituting misbehavior of any person in the magistrate judge's presence so as to obstruct the administration of justice. The order of contempt shall be issued pursuant to the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

''(3) ADDITIONAL CRIMINAL CONTEMPT AUTHORITY IN CIVIL CONSENT AND MISDEMEANOR CASES.—In any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, and in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, the magistrate judge shall have the power to punish by fine or imprisonment criminal contempt constituting disobedience or resistance to the magistrate judge's lawful writ, process, order, rule, decree, or command. Disposition of such contempt shall be conducted upon notice and hearing pursuant to the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

''(4) CIVIL CONTEMPT AUTHORITY IN CIVIL CONSENT AND MISDEMEANOR CASES.—In any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, and in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, the magistrate judge may exercise the civil contempt authority of the district court. This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the authority of a magistrate judge to order sanctions pursuant to any other statute, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, or the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

''(5) CRIMINAL CONTEMPT PENALTIES.—The sentence imposed by a magistrate judge for any criminal contempt provided for in paragraphs (2) and (3) shall not exceed the penalties for a Class C misdemeanor as set forth in sections 3581(b)(8) and 3571(b)(6) of title 18.

''(6) CERTIFICATION OF OTHER CONTEMPTS TO THE DISTRICT COURT.—Upon the commission of any such act—

''(A) in any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, or in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, that may, in the opinion of the magistrate judge, constitute a serious criminal contempt punishable by penalties exceeding those set forth in paragraph (5) of this subsection; or

''(B) in any other case or proceeding under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, or any other statute, where—

''(i) the act committed in the magistrate judge's presence may, in the opinion of the magistrate judge, constitute a serious criminal contempt punishable by penalties exceeding those set forth in paragraph (5) of this subsection;

''(ii) the act that constitutes a criminal contempt occurs outside the presence of the magistrate judge; or

''(iii) the act constitutes a civil contempt,

the magistrate judge shall forthwith certify the facts to a district judge and may serve or cause to be served upon any person whose behavior is brought into question under this paragraph an order requiring such person to appear before a district judge upon a day certain to show cause why he or she should not be adjudged in contempt by reason of the facts so certified. The district judge shall thereupon hear the evidence as to the act or conduct complained of and, if it is such as to warrant punishment, punish such person in the same manner and to the same extent as for a contempt committed before a district judge.

''(7) APPEALS OF MAGISTRATE JUDGE CONTEMPT ORDERS.—The appeal of an order of contempt pursuant to this subsection shall be made to the court of appeals in cases proceeding under subsection (c) of this section. In any other proceeding in which a United States magistrate judge presides under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, section 3401 of title 18, or any other statute, the appeal of a magistrate judge's summary contempt order shall be made to the district court.''.

SEC. 203. CONSENT TO MAGISTRATE JUDGE AUTHORITY IN PETTY OFFENSE CASES AND MAGISTRATE JUDGE AUTHORITY IN MISDEMEANOR CASES INVOLVING JUVENILE DEFENDANTS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 18.—

(1) PETTY OFFENSE CASES.—Section 3401(b) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''that is a class B misdemeanor charging a motor vehicle offense, a class C misdemeanor, or an infraction,'' after ''petty offense''.

(2) CASES INVOLVING JUVENILES.—Section 3401(g) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: ''The magistrate judge may, in a petty offense case involving a juvenile, exercise all powers granted to the district court under chapter 403 of this title.'';

(B) in the second sentence by striking ''any other class B or C misdemeanor case'' and inserting ''the case of any misdemeanor, other than a petty offense,''; and

(C) by striking the last sentence.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 28.—Section 636(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraphs (4) and (5) and inserting in the following:

''(4) the power to enter a sentence for a petty offense; and

''(5) the power to enter a sentence for a class A misdemeanor in a case in which the parties have consented.''.

SEC. 204. SAVINGS AND LOAN DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

Section 604 of title 28, United States Code, is amended in subsection (a) by striking the second paragraph designated (24).

SEC. 205. MEMBERSHIP IN CIRCUIT JUDICIAL COUNCILS.

Section 332(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) Except for the chief judge of the circuit, either judges in regular active service or judges retired from regular active service under section 371(b) of this title may serve as members of the council. Service as a member of a judicial council by a judge retired from regular active service under section 371(b) may not be considered for meeting the requirements of section 371(f) (1)(A), (B), or (C).''; and

(2) in paragraph (5) by striking ''retirement,'' and inserting ''retirement under section 371(a) or section 372(a) of this title,''.

SEC. 206. SUNSET OF CIVIL JUSTICE EXPENSE AND DELAY REDUCTION PLANS.

Section 103(b)(2)(A) of the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–650; 104 Stat. 5096; 28 U.S.C. 471 note), as amended by Public Law 105–53 (111 Stat. 1173), is amended by inserting ''471,'' after ''sections''.

SEC. 207. REPEAL OF COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FILING FEE.

Section 2520 of title 28, United States Code, and the item relating to such section in the table of contents for chapter 165 of such title, are repealed.

SEC. 208. TECHNICAL BANKRUPTCY CORRECTION.

Section 1228 of title 11, United States Code, is amended by striking ''1222(b)(10)'' each place it appears and inserting ''1222(b)(9)''.

SEC. 209. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT RELATING TO THE TREATMENT OF CERTAIN BANKRUPTCY FEES COLLECTED.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The first sentence of section 406(b) of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1990 (Public Law 101–162; 103 Stat. 1016; 28 U.S.C. 1931 note) is amended by striking ''service enumerated after item 18'' and inserting ''service not of a kind described in any of the items enumerated as items 1 through 7 and as items 9 through 18, as in effect on November 21, 1989,''.

(b) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENT.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to fees collected before the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE III—JUDICIAL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION, BENEFITS, AND PROTECTIONS

SEC. 301. JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS RETIREMENT MATTERS.

(a) DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE.—Section 611 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d), by inserting ''a congressional employee in the capacity of primary administrative assistant to a Member of Congress or in the capacity of staff director or chief counsel for the majority or the minority of a committee or subcommittee of the Senate or House of Representatives,'' after ''Congress,'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking ''who has served at least fifteen years and'' and inserting ''who has at least fifteen years of service and has''; and

(B) in the first undesignated paragraph, by striking ''who has served at least ten years,'' and inserting ''who has at least ten years of service,''; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''served at least fifteen years,'' and inserting ''at least fifteen years of service,''; and

(B) by striking ''served less than fifteen years,'' and inserting ''less than fifteen years of service,''.

(b) DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.—Section 627 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (e), by inserting ''a congressional employee in the capacity of primary administrative assistant to a Member of Congress or in the capacity of staff director or chief counsel for the majority or the minority of a committee or subcommittee of the Senate or House of Representatives,'' after ''Congress,'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''who has served at least fifteen years and'' and inserting ''who has at least fifteen years of service and has''; and

(B) in the first undesignated paragraph, by striking ''who has served at least ten years,'' and inserting ''who has at least ten years of service,''; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''served at least fifteen years,'' and inserting ''at least fifteen years of service,''; and

(B) by striking ''served less than fifteen years,'' and inserting ''less than fifteen years of service,''.

SEC. 302. TRAVEL EXPENSES OF JUDGES.

Section 456 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h)(1) In this subsection, the term 'travel expenses'—

''(A) means the expenses incurred by a judge for travel that is not directly related to any case assigned to such judge; and

''(B) shall not include the travel expenses of a judge if—

''(i) the payment for the travel expenses is paid by such judge from the personal funds of such judge; and

''(ii) such judge does not receive funds (including reimbursement) from the United States or any other person or entity for the payment of such travel expenses.

''(2)(A) Each circuit judge of a court of appeals shall annually submit the information required under paragraph (3) to the chief judge for the circuit in which the judge is assigned.

''(B) Each district judge shall annually submit the information required under paragraph (3) to the chief judge for the district in which the judge is assigned.

''(3)(A) Each chief judge of each circuit and each district shall submit an annual report to the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts on the travel expenses of each judge assigned to the applicable circuit or district (including the travel expenses of the chief judge of such circuit or district).

''(B) The annual report under this paragraph shall include—

''(i) the travel expenses of each judge, with the name of the judge to whom the travel expenses apply;

''(ii) a description of the subject matter and purpose of the travel relating to each travel expense identified under clause (i), with the name of the judge to whom the travel applies; and

''(iii) the number of days of each travel described under clause (ii), with the name of the judge to whom the travel applies.

''(4)(A) The Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts shall—

''(i) consolidate the reports submitted under paragraph (3) into a single report; and

''(ii) annually submit such consolidated report to Congress.

''(B) The consolidated report submitted under this paragraph shall include the specific information required under paragraph (3)(B), including the name of each judge with respect to clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of paragraph (3)(B).''.

SEC. 303. TRANSFER OF COUNTY TO MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA.

(a) TRANSFER.—Section 118 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking ''Philadelphia, and Schuylkill'' and inserting ''and Philadelphia''; and

(2) in subsection (b) by inserting ''Schuylkill,'' after ''Potter,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall take effect 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) PENDING CASES NOT AFFECTED.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall not affect any action commenced before the effective date of this section and pending on such date in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

(3) JURIES NOT AFFECTED.—This section and the amendments made by this section shall not affect the composition, or preclude the service, of any grand or petit jury summoned, impaneled, or actually serving on the effective date of this section.

SEC. 304. PAYMENTS TO MILITARY SURVIVORS BENEFITS PLAN.

Section 371(e) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting after ''such retired or retainer pay'' the following: '', except such pay as is deductible from the retired or retainer pay as a result of participation in any survivor's benefits plan in connection with the retired pay,''.

SEC. 305. CREATION OF CERTIFYING OFFICERS IN THE JUDICIAL BRANCH.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF DISBURSING AND CERTIFYING OFFICERS.—Chapter 41 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 613. Disbursing and certifying officers

''(a) DISBURSING OFFICERS.—The Director may designate in writing officers and employees of the judicial branch of the Government, including the courts as defined in section 610 other than the Supreme Court, to be disbursing officers in such numbers and locations as the Director considers necessary. Such disbursing officers shall—

''(1) disburse moneys appropriated to the judicial branch and other funds only in strict accordance with payment requests certified by the Director or in accordance with subsection (b);

''(2) examine payment requests as necessary to ascertain whether they are in proper form, certified, and approved; and

''(3) be held accountable for their actions as provided by law, except that such a disbursing officer shall not be held accountable or responsible for any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment resulting from any false, inaccurate, or misleading certificate for which a certifying officer is responsible under subsection (b).

''(b) CERTIFYING OFFICERS.—(1) The Director may designate in writing officers and employees of the judicial branch of the Government, including the courts as defined in section 610 other than the Supreme Court, to certify payment requests payable from appropriations and funds. Such certifying officers shall be responsible and accountable for—

''(A) the existence and correctness of the facts recited in the certificate or other request for payment or its supporting papers;

''(B) the legality of the proposed payment under the appropriation or fund involved; and

''(C) the correctness of the computations of certified payment requests.

''(2) The liability of a certifying officer shall be enforced in the same manner and to the same extent as provided by law with respect to the enforcement of the liability of disbursing and other accountable officers. A certifying officer shall be required to make restitution to the United States for the amount of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment resulting from any false, inaccurate, or misleading certificates made by

the certifying officer, as well as for any payment prohibited by law or which did not represent a legal obligation under the appropriation or fund involved.

''(c) RIGHTS.—A certifying or disbursing officer—

''(1) has the right to apply for and obtain a decision by the Comptroller General on any question of law involved in a payment request presented for certification; and

''(2) is entitled to relief from liability arising under this section in accordance with title 31.

''(d) OTHER AUTHORITY NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this section affects the authority of the courts with respect to moneys deposited with the courts under chapter 129 of this title.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 41 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following item:

''613. Disbursing and certifying officers.''.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not be construed to authorize the hiring of any Federal officer or employee.

(d) DUTIES OF DIRECTOR.—Paragraph (8) of subsection (a) of section 604 of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(8) Disburse appropriations and other funds for the maintenance and operation of the courts;''.

SEC. 306. AUTHORITY TO PRESCRIBE FEES FOR TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN THE COURTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 41 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 614. Authority to prescribe fees for technology resources in the courts

''The Judicial Conference is authorized to prescribe reasonable fees pursuant to sections 1913, 1914, 1926, 1930, and 1932, for collection by the courts for use of information technology resources provided by the judiciary for remote access to the courthouse by litigants and the public, and to facilitate the electronic presentation of cases. Fees under this section may be collected only to cover the costs of making such information technology resources available for the purposes set forth in this section. Such fees shall not be required of persons financially unable to pay them. All fees collected under this section shall be deposited in the Judiciary Information Technology Fund and be available to the Director without fiscal year limitation to be expended on information technology resources developed or acquired to advance the purposes set forth in this section.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 41 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''614. Authority to prescribe fees for technology resources in the courts.''.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Chapter 123 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating the section 1932 entitled ''Revocation of earned release credit'' as section 1933 and placing it after the section 1932 entitled ''Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation''; and

(2) in the table of sections by striking the 2 items relating to section 1932 and inserting the following:

''1932. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation.

''1933. Revocation of earned release credit.''.

TITLE IV—FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDERS

SEC. 401. TORT CLAIMS ACT AMENDMENT RELATING TO LIABILITY OF FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDERS.

Section 2671 of title 28, United States Code, is amended in the second undesignated paragraph—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''includes''; and

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: '', and (2) any officer or employee of a Federal public defender organization, except when such officer or employee performs professional services in the course of providing representation under section 3006A of title 18.''.

By Mr. GRAMS:

S. 2517. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to establish a pilot program commencing in crop year 2000 for a period of 2 years in certain States to provide improved crop insurance options for producers; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

THE CROP INSURANCE REFORM ACT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill which takes an important step toward improving the nation's federal crop insurance program—the ''Crop Insurance Reform Act.''

Over the last year, we have witnessed devastating circumstances come together to create a crisis atmosphere for many of our nation's farmers. I know that in my own state of Minnesota, multiple years of wet weather and crop disease—especially scab—coupled with rising production costs and plummeting commodity prices is wiping out family farms in record numbers.

With the increased opportunities that accompany Freedom to Farm come increased risks. We've seen this first hand.

Freedom to Farm can work, but a necessary component of it is an adequate crop insurance program. This component has been missing so far. One of the promises made during debate of the 1996 Farm Bill was that Congress would address the need for better crop insurance.

We must not let another growing season pass without having instituted a new, effective crop insurance program. This overhaul is a major undertaking, but instituting a program of comprehensive reform must be a priority upon our return in January.

And, we must start the debate now so that we can have the best system in place in time. The bill I'm introducing today is a first step. It is the result of months of work from my Minnesota Crop Insurance Work Group.

The Work Group consists of various commodity groups, farm organizations, rural lenders, and agriculture economists. We have also worked closely with USDA's Farm Service and Risk Management Agencies. But it was my primary intention to assemble a committee of farmers and lenders—people who know the situation and have seen the problems first hand.

The Crop Insurance Reform Act is designed to address the coverage decision a farmer must make at the initial stages of purchasing crop insurance.

This bill allows more options for producers to choose from when making risk-management decisions. It essentially provides farmers with an enhanced coverage product at a more affordable price.

Currently, producer premium subsidies range from nearly 42% at the 100% price election for 65% coverage, to only 13% at the 100% price election for 85% coverage. Producers continue to stress that, although the Risk Management Agency has recently provided better product options, the subsidy levels at the higher ends of coverage make them cost prohibitive.

This bill will put in place a flat subsidy level of 29% across the 100% price election and at all levels of coverage. This will adjust the producer premiums to make better coverage more affordable.

When farmers are armed with the necessary risk management tools, everybody saves. The government saves in ad hoc disaster payments, arguably the most expensive way to address any kind of financial crisis. But more importantly, the family farmer saves.

This bill is just the beginning of reform. Over the next few months, I will continue to work with my Crop Insurance Work Group, and my colleagues, Senators LUGAR and ROBERTS, to craft a comprehensive program which directly benefits producers and protects the taxpayers.

By Mr. MOYNIHAN:

S. 2518. A bill to enhance family life; to the Committee on Finance.

THE ENHANCING FAMILY LIFE ACT OF 1998

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, today I introduce the Enhancing Family Life Act of 1998, a bill inspired by an extraordinary set of proposals by one of our nation's most eminent social scientists, Professor James Q. Wilson. On December 4, 1997, I had the honor of hearing Professor Wilson—who is an old and dear friend—deliver the Francis Boyer Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). The Boyer Lecture is delivered at AEI's annual dinner by a thinker who has ''made notable intellectual or practical contributions to improved public policy and social welfare.'' Previous Boyer lecturers have included Irving Kristol, Alan Greenspan, and Henry Kissinger. In his lecture, Professor Wilson argued that ''two nations'' now exist within the United States. He said:

> In one nation, a child, raised by two parents, acquires an education, a job, a spouse, and a home kept separate from crime and disorder by distance, fences, or guards. In the other nation, a child is raised by an unwed girl, lives in a neighborhood filled with many sexual men but few committed fathers, and finds gang life to be necessary for self-protection and valuable for self-advancement.

Sadly, this is an all-too-accurate portrait of the American underclass, the