

treatment of this devastating disease. And through the CDC, a recent initiative focused on the prevention and early detection of breast and cervical cancer is already saving lives. In just the year since this program was begun in Connecticut, over 19,000 women received free screening for breast cancer—and 15 cases were caught early while they were still treatable. Over 1,000 women were checked for cervical cancer—and 8 cases were detected.

We've taken a number of important steps toward improving women's health, but we must continue to support and sustain these programs if we are to truly reap the benefits of our initial investments. This bill clearly is a good start.

I am concerned that some critical areas of women's health have been omitted from the bill. We would be remiss if issues so important to women's health, such as sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health were neglected. However, I know that Senator FRIST has indicated his willingness to continue the dialogue and to work with members of the Labor Committee to include these programs prior to markup.

This legislation is the continuation of a commitment that we have made to women and our nation and makes a sound and intelligent investment in the long term health of this country. I again offer my support and urge swift consideration of this bill.●

NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH

● Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, this month—March 1998—is National Eye Donor Month. The purpose of National Eye Donor Month is simple: It is to alert each and every American family to the terrific opportunity each of us has to make a difference in someone else's life.

Many Americans don't realize that they have it in their power to give somebody else the ability to see. But it's true. If you declare now that after your passing, you want your eyes to be donated to an eye bank, your eyes can become someone else's gift of sight.

Mr. President, this is a great opportunity. Indeed, it is a great responsibility—one that all of us should take very, very seriously.

According to the most recent statistics, over 4,000 Americans are waiting for a corneal transplant—an operation that can restore the gift of sight. These Americans could have this operation today—if only there were enough donated eyes available.

The purpose of National Eye Donor Month is to remind Americans that we can make those corneas available. Every year, thousands of Americans donate their eyes to eye banks. In 1996, over 87,000 eyes were donated—and over 43,000 transplants were performed.

Now, these numbers need some explaining. That seems like a pretty substantial disparity. But there's a good reason for it—a very strict screening

process that keeps out those who test positive with HIV, those who have hepatitis, and those with unhealthy cells on their corneas.

Those are just a few of the reasons why many corneas are unsuitable for transplantation. But the corneas from these donors are used. They are used in other very important ways. They are used for research and surgical training, and other medical education.

It's because of this screening process that I just described that eye transplant operations have such an incredible success rate—over 90 percent.

This screening process and this rate of success, however, require a greater number of donations. If we could increase the number of eyes donated to eye banks, we could take care of the 4,545 patients who are still waiting for corneal transplants today, as well as the 40,000 people who join their ranks every year.

Mr. President, as I said, this kind of surgery really works. In the 37 years since the founding of the Eye Bank Association of America, EBBA-member eye banks have made possible over half a million corneal transplants.

But there simply aren't enough eye donors. The only solution is public education—making the American people aware of what we can do to help out.

That's what National Eye Donor Month is all about. This month, let's recommit ourselves—as a nation—to giving the gift of sight to our fellow citizens.●

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT, S. 1173

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Thursday the Senate overwhelmingly approved reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). I want to take this opportunity to explain the benefits of this legislation for the State of Illinois.

First, let me offer my congratulations and also say thank you to Senators CHAFEE and BAUCUS for their extraordinary work in bringing this bill to the floor and shepherding it through in record time. The final product, S. 1173, reflects their diligent work and profound understanding of our nation's diverse transportation needs.

Illinois is a vitally important link in our nation's transportation system. My colleague, Senator CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN, who has helped lead an important effort to improve this bill to reflect Illinois' needs, has referred to the State as the "Transportation Hub of the Nation." I couldn't agree more.

Illinois has the third largest Interstate system in the nation. It is a critical freight transfer point. The Chicago area boasts of the nation's largest intermodal hub. Illinois is also a passenger and freight rail hub. The State's ports handle the third largest amount of domestic waterborne traffic. Illinois' rivers are the fourth busiest in the nation. The Chicago Transit Authority

operates the nation's second largest public transportation system. And, of course, O'Hare International Airport is the busiest in the world.

Unfortunately, Illinois' urban roads have been rated as the second worst in the nation. And, the six-county Chicago region is considered the fifth most congested area in the U.S.

This ISTEA reauthorization is a good first step toward improving the conditions of Illinois' roads and bridges, properly funding mass transit in Chicago and downstate, alleviating congestion, and addressing highway safety and the environment.

The bill provides \$173 billion over six years for highway, highway safety, and other surface transportation programs. Illinois can expect to receive more than \$5.3 billion over six years from the highway formula, as well as from the high density and the bonus programs. That's a 29 percent increase or \$1.2 billion more than the ISTEA of 1991. Major reconstruction and rehabilitation projects like Downtown Chicago's Wacker Drive and the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) will be able to move forward thanks, in large part, to this legislation.

Mass transit funding is vitally important to the Chicago area as well as to so many downstate communities. It helps alleviate congestion and provides access to thousands of Illinoisans everyday. Under the Banking Committee title, Illinois can expect to receive \$2.1 billion over six years. A 40 percent increase or \$600 million more than the 1991 ISTEA. These important transit dollars will help the Chicago Transit Authority rehabilitate several lines, the METRA and PACE systems in Northeastern Illinois expand and improve their service areas, the Metro Link light rail system in St. Clair County complete an Illinois extension, and transit authorities throughout the state purchase and upgrade bus and bus facilities.

The Senate bill also preserves and expands some important environmental and enhancement programs, for example the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program and bicycle pedestrian facilities. CMAQ's goal is to help states meet their air quality conformity requirements as prescribed by the Clean Air Act. S. 1173 increases funding for CMAQ by 18 percent. Illinois can expect more than \$1 billion over six years under the program. S. 1173 also provides for increases in funds for transportation enhancement activities, such as bicycle pedestrian facilities and historic preservation.

This bill also contains a number of highway safety provisions. One of the most notable is the .08 amendment. Thanks to the efforts of Senators LAUTENBERG and DEWINE, S. 1173 contains a provision that would lower the legal blood-alcohol concentration level for drivers to .08. It's a law that Illinois has had on the books since July 1997. The provision could save as many as 600 lives a year.

Finally, the Senate ISTE A bill extends the current excise tax exemption for an important Illinois product—corn-based, renewable ethanol fuel—to 2007. Farmers and the ethanol industry must be able to plan for the future. Extending the incentive will allow them to do so.

Mr. President, the Senate's action on ISTE A sets the stage for Congress to uphold its obligation to reauthorize these vitally important transportation programs before they expire again later this spring. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that our nation's transportation needs are properly met.●

REMEMBERING SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF

● Mr. THOMPSON. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to talk about a man who served the people of Connecticut and America with dignity, honor and great style. Abraham Ribicoff spent most of his life in the public service. Before he became a Senator in 1962, he was a Congressman, the Governor of Connecticut, and the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Kennedy administration. He was a true leader in the Senate on many issues and his style of leadership and public service will be greatly missed.

During his time in the Senate, Senator Ribicoff served on the Government Operations Committee, which was renamed the Governmental Affairs Committee during his tenure. He began his service on the committee on February 25, 1963 and served as Chairman from 1977 to 1980.

As Chairman, Senator Ribicoff oversaw the passage of many initiatives we now take for granted in the government. One such bill was the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, which was the first substantive reform of the Federal civil service in nearly 100 years. He also helped to enact the Ethics in Government Act, which mandates public disclosure for high-ranking officials in the three branches of the Federal Government. He navigated to passage legislation that created Inspectors General in each of the major federal agencies to serve as public watchdogs to combat waste, fraud and abuse in federal programs.

During his tenure as Chairman of the Committee, Senator Ribicoff also oversaw the implementation of legislation that established a permanent, Cabinet-level Department of Energy in the executive branch. By doing so, all of the federal government's major energy programs were brought together in one place, including those programs relating to economic regulation of energy supply systems. He also worked closely with Senator GLENN to help enact the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, which established a more effective framework for international cooperation to meet the energy needs of nations. It also ensured that the world-

wide development of peaceful nuclear activities and the export by any nation of nuclear materials, equipment, and nuclear technology intended for the use in peaceful nuclear activities did not contribute to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

An area in which Senator Ribicoff and I shared a great interest is that of federal regulation and how to make it more effective, and at the same time, less burdensome. On July 26, 1975, Senate Resolution 71, introduced by Senator Ribicoff and Senator GLENN, was agreed to by the Committee. This resolution authorized a study of Federal regulatory agencies to be undertaken jointly by the Committee on Commerce and the Committee on Government Operations. The first two of these studies which the Committee on Government Operations compiled were entitled "Study on Federal Regulation: The Regulatory Appointment Process," and "Study on Federal Regulation: Congressional Oversight of Executive Agencies." These two studies set the groundwork for the regulatory reform work that the committee undertook at that time and which we continue to pursue today.

I want to acknowledge Senator Ribicoff for having the foresight, some twenty years ago, to examine the regulatory process. As I have found out this is not an easy task, but well worth the effort. While Senator Ribicoff's leadership and public service will be greatly missed, it is my hope that we can carry on his pioneering work and establish a better and smarter regulatory process.●

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS ACT OF 1998

● Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask that the text of S. 1636, a bill to provide benefits to domestic partners of Federal employees, be printed in the RECORD.

The text of the bill follows:

S. 1636

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Domestic Partnership Benefits and Obligations Act of 1998".

SEC. 2. BENEFITS TO DOMESTIC PARTNERS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A domestic partner of an employee shall be entitled to benefits available to and obligations imposed upon a spouse of an employee.

(b) CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY.—In order to obtain benefits under this Act, an employee shall file an affidavit of eligibility for benefits with the Office of Personnel Management certifying that the employee and the domestic partner of the employee—

- (1) are each other's sole domestic partner and intend to remain so indefinitely;
- (2) have a common residence, and intend to continue the arrangement;
- (3) are at least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract;
- (4) share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's common welfare and financial obligations;
- (5) are not married to or domestic partners with anyone else;

(6) understand that willful falsification of information within the affidavit may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment, and the recovery of the cost of benefits received related to such falsification; and

(7) are same sex domestic partners, and not related in a way that, if the 2 were of opposite sex, would prohibit legal marriage in the State in which they reside.

(c) DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An employee or domestic partner of an employee who obtains benefits under this Act shall file a statement of dissolution of the domestic partnership with the Office of Personnel Management not later than 30 days after the death of the employee or the domestic partner or the date of dissolution of the domestic partnership.

(2) DEATH OF EMPLOYEE.—In a case in which an employee dies, the domestic partner of the employee at the time of death shall be deemed a spouse of the employee for the purpose of receiving benefits under this Act.

(3) OTHER DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In a case in which a domestic partnership dissolves by a method other than death of the employee or domestic partner of the employee, any benefits received by the domestic partner as a result of this Act shall terminate.

(B) EXCEPTION.—In a case in which a domestic partnership dissolves by a method other than death of the employee or domestic partner of the employee, any health benefits received by the domestic partner as a result of this Act shall continue for a period of 60 days after the date of the dissolution of the partnership. The domestic partner shall pay for such benefits in the same manner that a former spouse would pay for such benefits under section 8905a of title 5, United States Code.

(d) SUBSEQUENT PARTNERSHIPS.—If an employee files a statement of dissolution of partnership under subsection (c)(1), the employee may file a certification of eligibility under subsection (b) relating to another partner—

(1) not earlier than 180 days after the date of filing such statement of dissolution, if such dissolution did not result from the death of a partner; or

(2) on any date after the filing of such statement of dissolution, if such dissolution resulted from the death of a partner.

(e) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Any information submitted to the Office of Personnel Management under subsection (b) shall be used solely for the purpose of certifying an individual's eligibility for benefits under subsection (a).

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) DOMESTIC PARTNER.—The term "domestic partner" means an adult person living with, but not married to, another adult person in a committed, intimate relationship.

(2) BENEFITS.—The term "benefits" means—

(A) any benefit under the civil service retirement system under chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code, including any benefit from participation in the thrift savings plan under subchapter III of chapter 84 of such title;

(B) any benefit under the Federal employees' retirement system under chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code;

(C) life insurance benefits under chapter 87 of title 5, United States Code;

(D) health insurance benefits under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code; and

(E) compensation for work injuries under chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) EMPLOYEE.—

(A) With respect to Civil Service Retirement, the term "employee" shall have the