

Community college status was granted in 1978 and the centers officially became known as Prince William Sound Community College.

In 1989, the College received accreditation from the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and has maintained that status. Since that date, the College has established several new programs, such as the Prince William Sound Community College Theater Conference, which attracts nationally-known dramatists; the Industrial Safety/Marine Response Training Department; a wellness center; and a television station.

The University of Alaska merged all community colleges into the university system in 1987. Prince William Sound Community College has remained the only individually-accredited community college in the system because of the continuing strong support from the City of Valdez. The University of Alaska's Board of Regents has recognized the growth and accomplishment of the College by approving several new degree and certificate programs.

In twenty years of existence, Prince William Sound Community College has developed into a recognized leader in the University of Alaska system and continues to serve Prince William Sound and the Cooper Basin area as a comprehensive community college intent on life-long learning.

I urge other Senators to help us pass this resolution to commend the Prince William Sound Community College for these accomplishments in conjunction with its 20th anniversary on May 10, 1998.●

#### THANKING OUR NATION'S CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to thank our nation's Corrections Officers for their selfless dedication to rehabilitating those members of our society who have strayed from the path of the just. I would especially like to recognize the 5,500 members of the New Jersey State Corrections Officers Association whose daily work allows our children to grow in an environment unfettered by criminal elements. These courageous men and women risk their lives on a daily basis and deserve to be recognized for their efforts on our behalf.

Although Corrections Officers play a critical role in safeguarding our communities from convicted felons, they receive very little public recognition for their work. When a felon is apprehended the police receive the credit for the arrest and the prosecuting attorney is praised for proving the felon's guilt. Juries are hailed as courageous and the judges imposing sentences are lauded for their commitment to justice. Once the trial process is completed and a felon is convicted, that person goes to prison and is forgotten

by mainstream society. However, Corrections Officers are not allowed to forget because they deal with convicted felons on a daily basis. From rehabilitating to guarding those people who have forfeited their rights to live in our communities, Corrections Officers find themselves in high risk situations every day.

In a society that believes in the fundamental importance of law and order, it is important to remember the people who help those principles flourish. By ensuring that inmates are rehabilitated before re-entering our communities, Corrections Officers are disciplinarians and teachers. They impose the will of the people while teaching criminals about the need to adhere to the law. Clearly, there are formidable obstacles to these endeavors, and I am continually impressed by the way these officers persevere in spite of the difficulties they encounter. In a criminal justice system that places an ever increasing amount of pressure on Corrections Officers to be infallible, they maintain a consistently positive and professional attitude towards their jobs.

The men and women who work as Corrections Officers in our nation's prisons should be celebrated for their commitment to their communities. I am privileged to recognize their efforts and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.●

#### RECOGNITION OF REVEREND TED B. COMBS

● Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Reverend Ted B. Combs who recently stepped down as Pastor of the Oak Ridge Baptist Church. For 27 years, Reverend Combs faithfully led his congregation and selflessly gave to his community. His wife, Doris, and he have dedicated their lives to the service of God.

Oak Ridge Baptist Church is located in Wilkes County, North Carolina, in the western part of the state. Reverend Combs was born and raised in these parts not far from the church that he would one day pastor. He has been an integral part of the community since attending the local high school, Mountain View. As an adult in Wilkes County, Reverend Combs has served the community in numerous positions including board member of the Wilkes County Nursing Home and honorary member of Mountain View Ruritan.

The greatest testament, however, to Reverend Combs' stature in and respect among the community is given through those that live there. Wilkes County has a population of a little more than 60,000 citizens, and one would be hard pressed to find anyone who didn't speak kindly of Reverend Combs. His work in Wilkes County has touched the lives of so many.

I'm proud to recognize the achievement of Reverend Ted B. Combs before the United States Senate and privileged to call him a fellow North Carolinian.●

#### MILITARY HEALTH CARE

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, one of my proudest honors as a United States Senator is to serve as the Ranking Member on the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is in this capacity that I feel I can contribute to supporting the men and women in our Armed Forces.

Last week I introduced a military health care proposal which I referred to as KP Duty, as in "Keeping Promises Duty." In the military, KP stands for "kitchen police" which is a term for messhall clean up which recruits are tasked to do when they go through basic training. This KP duty I am proposing is for all of us to clean up a commitment—the promises made to our servicemen and women.

The Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 105-85) included a Sense of the Congress Resolution which provided a finding that "many retired military personnel believe that they were promised lifetime health care in exchange for 20 or more years of service." Furthermore, it expressed the sense of Congress that "the United States has incurred a moral obligation" to provide health care to members and retired members of the Armed Services and that Congress and the President should take steps to address "the problems associated with the availability of health care for such retirees within two years." I authored that resolution, and today in year one of this two-year challenge, my friend and colleague, Senator KEMPTHORNE, Chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I are ready to take the initial steps in fulfilling this obligation to our retirees.

In March, I hosted a military health care roundtable at Fort Gordon, Georgia. The positive and supportive working relationship between the Eisenhower Army Medical Center and the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia was highlighted by the panel speakers and audience members. These facilities have established a sharing agreement which allows each to provide certain health care services to the beneficiaries of the other. This type of joint approach has the potential to alleviate a significant portion of the accessibility problem faced by military retirees, especially given the reduction in DoD medical treatment facilities. In spite of these benchmarked efforts in cooperative care, beneficiaries who were in the audience still attested to insufficient accessibility to resources to meet their needs. One of the audience participants who was commenting on a health problem stated, "my life isn't the same as it was a year ago, and all I got was shuttled from one thing to another".

In a statement I submitted last week, I discussed a legislative initiative which would require the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to work toward enhancing their cooperative efforts in the

delivery of health care to the beneficiaries of these systems. This initiative includes several elements to enhance health care efficiencies. It provides for a study which would determine the demographics, geographic distribution and health care preferences and an assessment of the overall capacity of both systems to treat beneficiaries. The second provision would examine existing statutory, regulatory and cultural impediments that are currently precluding the optimal cooperation of DoD and VA in health care delivery. Finally, this initiative provides for the acceleration of several ongoing efforts such as the Electronic Transfer of Patient Information and the DoD/VA Federal Pharmaceutical Steering Committee. This legislative initiative was included in the Fiscal Year 1999 National Defense Authorization Act.

The legislation I wish to discuss today addresses the retirees who are aged 65 and older. The Government Accounting Office reports that of the population eligible for military health care, approximately 52% are retirees and dependents. Seventy one percent of military retirees are under the age of 65, while 29% of military retirees are aged 65 and older.

As we consider options for improving the DoD and VA health care systems, we need to be mindful of some basic facts. About 60% of retirees under the age of 65 live near a military treatment facility while only about 52% the retirees aged 65 and older live near such a facility. About two thirds of retirees under the age of 65 use the military health system. In comparison, only about a quarter of the retirees aged 65 and older use military medical facilities, and then only on a space available basis and primarily for pharmacy services.

According to a 1994-95 survey of DoD beneficiaries, just over 40 percent of military retirees, regardless of age, had private health insurance coverage. About a third of retirees aged 65 and older also reported having additional insurance to supplement their Medicare benefits. This is in part, due to their belief that the military health care system would take care of their needs throughout their lifetime.

The Military Health System has changed dramatically in recent years. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Warsaw Pact led to a major reassessment of U.S. defense policy. The DoD health care system changes have included the establishment of a managed care program, numerous facility closures, and significant downsizing of military medical staff. In the last decade, the number of military medical personnel has declined by 15 percent and the number of military hospitals has been reduced by one-third. The Fiscal Year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act directed DoD to prescribe and implement a nationwide managed health care benefit program modeled on health maintenance organization plans and in 1995,

beneficiaries began enrolling in this new program called TRICARE. With over 8 million beneficiaries, it is the largest health maintenance organization plan in the Nation.

One of the problems with TRICARE is what happens to retirees when they reach the age of 65. At that point, they are no longer eligible to participate in any TRICARE option. The law currently provides for transition from military health care to Medicare for these beneficiaries.

Mr. President, this is not the right solution, especially given the fact that Medicare does not currently reimburse the DoD for health care services, although Congress recently authorized a test of this concept, nor does Medicare include a pharmacy benefit. In addition, as the military begins to close and downsize military treatment facilities, retirees aged 65 and older are unable to obtain treatment on a space available basis. These retirees are, in effect, being shut out of the medical facilities promised to them.

The Medicare Subvention demonstration project that is scheduled to begin enrollment in the near future will only benefit retirees who live near military treatment facilities—which is only about half of all retirees. Those retirees living outside catchment areas won't even benefit from subvention. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to initiate a Veterans Affairs Subvention test. The limiting criteria of these tests is that they require beneficiaries to live near the respective treatment facilities. To accommodate those beneficiaries who do not live near treatment facilities or within a catchment area, we must explore other alternatives, including, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) option that has received so much attention recently.

There has been an overwhelming outpouring of support for offering FEHBP to military retirees. Although this program has achieved a successful reputation among federal employees, it is a very costly alternative which deserves close scrutiny, along with other health care options. I appreciate the fact that there are many advantages to FEHBP. Furthermore, I share the view that health care for military retirees should be at least as good as the health care we in the Congress afford ourselves.

However, there may be other options, or a combination of options that will allow us to keep our promises with our older retirees in a fiscally responsible manner. The option I am about to discuss is included in the Fiscal Year 1999 National Defense Authorization Act. Senator DIRK KEMPTHORNE, Chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I have worked closely on this issue over the past several months. Under his leadership, the Personnel Subcommittee held hearings on this issue which included testimony by the service Surgeons Generals, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health

Affairs, and representatives from military associations. Together, we have developed a plan to assist the Nation in meeting our obligation to the military retirees.

This legislation requires demonstrations to be conducted of three health care options: the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), TRICARE Standard (which replaced the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services or CHAMPUS), and Mail Order Pharmacy. Two different sites will be selected for each of the respective demonstrations.

Through FEHBP, military retirees could choose from different plan options. As with active and retired federal employees, military retirees who enrolled would be required to pay a premium. The amount of the premium would vary depending on which plan was chosen and the government and beneficiary share in the cost of the selected plan.

The TRICARE Standard option would be to extend the current coverage beyond age 64. Under this extension, the TRICARE Standard would serve as a supplemental policy to Medicare, covering most out-of-pocket costs not covered by Medicare. Even though this proposal would require retirees to enroll in Medicare part B, retirees should experience lower out-of-pocket costs. Because TRICARE Standard is an established program within DoD, the existing infrastructure could be used without significant increase in administrative costs.

Finally, the Medicare program does not provide coverage for outpatient prescriptions, a major expense for older people, who tend to use more prescription drugs. Military retirees can get prescriptions filled at military treatment facility pharmacies, but these facilities are not readily accessible to all older retirees. Expanding this mail order benefit to those who do not live near military facilities and do not currently have a mail order benefit would fill an important health care coverage gap. This would be the third demonstration.

The demonstrations will be scheduled to conclude within the same time frame as the ongoing Medicare Subvention test, approximately January 1, 2001, so all the test results can be simultaneously compared in determining the best option or combination of options to accommodate the retirees aged 65 and older.

Mr. President, as you know, S. 1334, a bill to provide for a test of FEHBP has 60 cosponsors. We agree that FEHBP warrants further examination which is why we have included it in the Committee's legislative proposal. We are very committed to finding the right solution to this shortcoming which is why we feel that evaluating several options is critical in this decision process. The proposal included in the Defense Authorization Act is far more comprehensive than S. 1334. At the end of these demonstrations, we would

have extensive data upon which we could base an informed decision regarding the best way for our Nation to provide health care to those who have earned it through the sacrifices inherent in military service.●

#### PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ULTIMATUM TO ISRAEL

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, President Clinton's ultimatum to Israel regarding proposals to withdrawal from the West Bank to secure the peace process is wrong and should be abandoned. What business is it of the United States to give an ultimatum to a democratically elected people regarding their own security interest? We should not publicly pressure an ally to violate their own security assessment. This is not a matter for Washington to decide, but rather for the Israeli people to decide.

The deadline imposed on Israel by the Administration removes any incentive for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to negotiate. The United States should encourage direct negotiation, not dictate the agenda. We need to exercise patience to reach a lasting peace, not risk Israeli security.

Mr. President, the Middle East peace process is taking place in a complex environment; caution—not irresponsible bravado—is required. There is no question that everyone involved wants peace in the Middle East. Yet, we must ask if our current actions are leading Israel and the Palestinian people toward security and freedom, or further from it. Putting pressure upon the people of Israel, forcing them to violate their own security needs, works against peace.

The Middle East continues to be defined by suspicion, hatred, and a continuing arms race. Terrorism's presence can be felt everywhere—in the markets and in the streets and cafes. And while much of the Arab world enters modernity, liberalizing economies and governments, radical Islamic extremism also grows. Anti-Semitism and the anti-Israeli refrain has not yet ceased to be heard through the souks and bazaars of the Middle East. This hatred is unfortunately a very real, very frightening, part of daily existence for the Israeli people.

Over the past several months of bipartisan discussions and personal dialogue with the administration, I've concluded two things. First, America can continue to play a vital role in the peace process, but our role must be limited to mediator and facilitator. Second, in spite of this administration's good intentions, the United States is currently trying to lead the talks toward a false goal—the Israelis understand this and resist. The President must understand that peace through ultimatum may get him an agreement, but an agreement which may provide a risky and false peace.

A lasting and secure peace represents the only worthy goal. And if this means that we wait and demonstrate patience and not arrogance, then we

should. The U.S. will eagerly take a share of the credit for a successful agreement, but we must remember—we do not pay the price of failure. The price of failure will be paid by the Palestinian and Israeli people, who will continue to live in fear of another bus bombing in the city center, of their children being targeted in buses and cafes.

#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to join those in this Chamber and around the globe who have spiritually linked arms to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. I am particularly happy to see that the people of my own hometown of Stamford, Connecticut have seen fit to join in the international chorus of voices commemorating this milestone.

After the horrors of the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel represented a significant turning point. The world community denounced an endemic hatred that had led to the decimation of a people and in doing so, set the stage for the renaissance of a culture that had been without a home for nearly two thousand years. The time of tribulation had passed and Jews were, at long last, reunited with their ancestral homeland.

Israel and the Old City of Jerusalem represent both the current state of humanity and the heights to which we can aspire. We have been taught that long ago, Israel was a gift to Abraham and his descendants, a token of thanks for his faithfulness. Since that time, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have each governed this land and each religion has developed a spiritual stake in the land. These religions have lived in neighboring and even overlapping communities for half a century, yet peace and security have remained elusive. We have recently begun to see the first opportunities for a lasting peace. When this opportunity is fully realized, Israel will truly stand as both symbol and reality that the forces that bind us together are far greater than the forces that seek to divide us.

The Jewish Community Center in Stamford will be holding its celebration on May 17, 1998. I am happy to join them and the millions of others who have lifted their voices in commemoration of this very important landmark.●

#### HONORING THE UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF STAMFORD ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, this month, the world's eyes are on the State of Israel as it celebrates the 50th Anniversary of its independence. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and praise the people of Israel on this historic occasion.

Many centuries ago, Isaiah prophesied that Israel would become "a light unto the nations." Today, Israel's light is shining brightly—not only for its

citizens, but for people throughout the world. This nation arose from the ashes of the Holocaust and has given the Jewish people of the world a permanent homeland.

The modern State of Israel has faced many obstacles in its short life, but it has survived them all, and in fact excelled in spite of them. Its population has grown from 600,000 in 1948 to nearly 6 million today as it has absorbed waves of immigrants from all over the globe. It is a vibrant democracy, with free and open elections and a free press. Despite a shortage of natural resources and many other obstacles, it has developed a thriving economy. And from this small nation, we have seen countless acclaimed writers, artists, and musicians.

Israel has also shared a special relationship with the United States. Over the years, our nations have stood together to preserve Israel's safety and security, and I want to take this opportunity to join my fellow Americans in pledging our continued support for this trusted ally.

This is also a time of celebration for members of the American Jewish population. Festivities are being held all across the country, and in my state of Connecticut, the United Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center of Stamford will hold a community-wide festival to commemorate the 50th anniversary on Sunday, May 17th. There will actually be another special event in Stamford the previous Thursday.

On May 14th, the United Jewish Federation of Stamford will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. Throughout the years, the UJF has played a vital role in building and maintaining a sense of unity among Stamford's Jewish community. They have helped to promote and enrich Jewish life in the area by coordinating educational, social and philanthropic activities. They have also worked to defend the political and religious rights of the Jewish people, not only in Connecticut, but around the Nation, in Israel, and throughout the world.

The UJF of Stamford's stated mission is to create a community based on the Jewish ideal of "tzedakah": charity, righteousness and social justice. Well, I would say that their works and actions have clearly embodied these three principles. I want to personally thank them for all that they have done to strengthen and improve both their community and our state, and I offer my sincere congratulations to them on this joyous anniversary.●

#### PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I am pleased to join the President, Vice President, and my colleagues in Congress in recognizing the significant contribution of all public employees to our Nation's well-being. This week,