

America's veterans perceive that Congress has turned its back on the Government's responsibility and promise to care for its veterans and on the role it played in fostering their addiction to tobacco—that is well known to the Presiding Officer and all other Members—distribution of free cigarettes in C-rations and K-rations; reduced prices; and they delayed the warning that appeared on tobacco in the military cigarettes until 5 years after it had been done at the civilian level.

Mr. President, we have spent weeks talking about addiction to tobacco and how powerful that addiction is and how that addiction has been fostered. Why is it when it comes to the issue of veterans and tobacco, it is viewed solely as a matter of personal choice? Why is it that this administration and this Congress believe that veterans should have had greater knowledge about tobacco's addictive properties when they began smoking than the general public did?

Veterans believe in doing their share and carrying their weight. They always have; they always will. But the Congress is not asking for cuts in all accounts this year, oh, no. In fact, we are not even demanding that others, such as Social Security disability recipients, lose smoking-related compensation. Again, only veterans are singled out for this treatment.

There has been a lot of talk about veterans and smoking in the last few months. So I want to make sure that my colleagues are not confused. The amendment that was adopted on Tuesday to direct a portion of the proceeds from the tobacco bill to VA health care in the tobacco bill, by voice vote, is only for health care. The tobacco-related amendment does not deal with disability benefits, compensation; only with health care, not compensation, benefits for tobacco-related illnesses. That is a major point.

Those of my colleagues who will seek refuge in the tobacco legislation need to reconsider. And, in fact, in some sadness I am not even sure there will be tobacco legislation. I hope otherwise. But one cannot be confident at this point.

In any event, some will say—and I close on this point—that the corrections bill puts in \$1.6 billion for other veterans programs. And indeed it does. But our friends in the veterans community speak with one voice on this issue. And I agree. They cannot support the increase in benefits to one set of veterans to be paid by the cutting of important benefits to another set of veterans.

Veterans across this Nation reject this attempt to buy them off. That is why I urge support of my amendment. It is a simple choice. Again, the choice is not highways versus veterans. Highways are fully protected. Veterans are not. Please choose veterans.

I thank the Presiding Officer and I yield the floor.

Mr. DEWINE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business for the next 25 minutes.

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

TOBACCO LEGISLATION AND THE COVERDELL-CRAIG AMENDMENT

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to support the Coverdell-Craig amendment. As the Chair knows, and Members know, the Coverdell-Craig amendment was offered yesterday to the underlying McCain tobacco bill. I congratulate my colleague from Georgia and my colleague from Idaho for this very worthwhile amendment.

Let me first, though, begin by saying, again, what I have said numerous times on the Senate floor in the last few weeks, and that is I support the underlying McCain bill.

It represents a unique and critical opportunity to change attitudes and to save young lives from the debilitating effects of smoking. All of us know, Mr. President, all too well, that youth smoking is a component of an even larger and more dangerous reality, the tragedy of youth drug use.

If we had to talk about the health problems in this country today, particularly if we want to talk about the preventable health problems in this country, we would talk about illicit drug use, we would talk about smoking, and we would talk about abuse of alcohol. Those three are clearly the three biggest, the things that will ultimately kill tens of thousands of Americans. They prey on our young.

So I think it makes sense, as we struggle in this Senate to come up with a comprehensive bill that deals with our tobacco problem in this country, that we also use this as an opportunity to deal with another problem, and certainly a related problem, and that is the use of illicit drugs. So I congratulate my friends and colleagues from Georgia and Idaho, Senator COVERDELL, Senator CRAIG, for this very good amendment.

I think we need to use this unique opportunity to address youth smoking. But we also need to take it one step further and address youth drug use. Doing so would make this even more effective, this current bill, the MCCAIN bill, even more effective in changing the young lives for the better.

Mr. President, drug trafficking remains a tragic reality of life in this country today. Let me share some facts with my colleagues.

Fact: Recent reports suggest that heroin trafficking from Mexico has dramatically increased.

Fact No. 2: The Caribbean is fast becoming once again a major illegal drug transit route.

Fact: While drug production and trafficking have been on the rise, our re-

sources we, as a country, have dedicated for drug interdiction have dramatically declined.

In 1987, approximately 27 percent of the entire national drug control budget was dedicated to interdiction. During that period of time, the United States did, in fact, make a dent in the trafficking of narcotics. Cocaine seizures, for example, were significantly up.

However, Mr. President, starting in the early 1990s, the percentage of drug control funds devoted to interdiction has declined dramatically. In fact, by 1995, only 10 percent of the national drug budget was dedicated to interdiction—a very significant drop. By 1998, the percentage still remained at 10 percent. Looking at it another way, in 1992, over \$2 billion was dedicated to interdiction purposes. But by 1995, only \$1.2 billion was set aside for this specific matter.

Mr. President, let me be very clear. I strongly support—strongly support—increased funding to deal with the demand side of the drug situation that is finding ways to persuade Americans, particularly young Americans, that doing drugs is wrong, that it destroys lives, and destroys families, schools, and communities.

In a sense, Mr. President, we could argue that in the end reducing demand is the only real effective way to ultimately overcome the threat of drugs in this country today. As long as there is a demand for drugs, there will always be a supply. That is why education as well as drug treatment remains central long-term goals.

The amendment offered by the Senator from Georgia and the Senator from Idaho recognizes the need to invest in demand-reduction efforts, as well as the need to invest in interdiction efforts. However, reducing the demand for drugs is not going to be achieved overnight. It will take years, if not generations, to change minds and attitudes regarding the use or abuse of drugs.

I believe one way to reduce demand is to have an effective interdiction policy, one that will put a serious dent into the flow of drugs into this country. We must find ways to raise the cost of narcotics trafficking, making it far more difficult for drug lords to bring these drugs to our Nation and making the cost of drugs on the streets—whether that be the streets of New York, Los Angeles or Cleveland—making the cost of those drugs go up. Just like the underlying bill, we can impact demand by raising the street value of drugs, and we can do that by going after the supply routes.

There is an inverse relationship between the cost and consumption. I believe that is true with drugs. I believe that is also true with cigarettes. That is the basic principle of the McCain bill. I think it is logical to extend that principle, as my colleagues have done, Senator COVERDELL and Senator CRAIG, in this amendment.

As I mentioned, I do want to make it very, very clear: Drug interdiction,

which I am talking about this afternoon, is only one of the things that we have to do. We have to have good domestic law enforcement. We have to deal with the problem of treatment. Treatment does work. It is tough but it can, in fact, work. We can save lives. We have to continue to invest in treatment. Education prevention—that works, as well, as long as we are consistent. As long as we do something consistently through a child's life, it works. So we need to focus on that, as well.

Let me turn now to what I was talking about a moment ago, that is the need to increase our emphasis on drug interdiction. As I mentioned before, the Caribbean is becoming more and more the transit route of choice for drug traffickers. I made two visits to this transit zone in the Caribbean in the last several months. During my last visit, I learned that our agents in the Bahamas have seized more cocaine in the first 3 months of 1998 than in the past previous 3 years combined. With sufficient funding, interdiction efforts can make a huge difference. Clearly, drastic funding reductions have drastic consequences when it comes to results.

I had the chance on these visits to meet with the soldiers on the front lines, or sailors on the front lines of our war on drugs. I witnessed our strategy in action. I sat down with the experts, both military and civilian, the people who are actually on the front line, the people who are charged with carrying out the monitoring, the detection, and the interdiction of drugs. Given what I have learned during these visits and the conclusions I have reached, the amendment by the Senators from Georgia and Idaho could not have come at a better time. There is a dire need for a renewed commitment, a rededication of resources toward drug interdiction.

With energy and with adequate resources, our drug interdiction efforts can be improved. We cannot ask those tasked to implement our drug interdiction strategy to conduct their missions without the proper level of resources to do the job. One reason why is simple: This drug interdiction puts the lives of these law enforcement officers in danger. That is the nature of the business. We have to ensure that they have the best equipment, the best resources and the best intelligence so that they can carry out this mission, not only so they can be effective, but so they can do it in as safe a way as humanly possible. The men and women charged with interdicting drugs face a ruthless enemy who will go to great lengths to protect their cartel. We are dealing with millions and millions of dollars.

When I visited the Caribbean last month, I saw videos of drug traffickers in "go-fast" boats—that is what they are called, go-fast boats—that are made almost exclusively for the only purpose of bringing drugs up from Colombia, bringing up drugs from that part of the world. I saw videos of the

go-fast boats literally running over Customs vessels in the shallow waters south of Florida during a nighttime interdiction pursuit. I believe we owe it to these law enforcement officers to ensure they have the proper equipment and manpower to do the job they were asked to perform. After all, it is unfortunate reality that the drug cartels don't have a budget process or a bureaucracy to slow them down. These drug cartels, these drug lords, are constantly adjusting to their environment and updating their equipment.

What kind of resources are we talking about? What kind of resources do I believe we are lacking? Let me use the U.S. Customs Service operating in south Florida as just one example. In 1986, Customs had 77 vessels and 124 maritime officers. Today, they are now down to 30 vessels and 23 officers. Funding for the Maritime Enforcement Program is down from \$13.25 million—that was the figure in 1992—to \$5.2 billion. So we have gone from \$13.25 million in 1992 to \$5.2 million in 1997.

Further, Customs no longer has a 7-day, 24-hour operation. To make matters worse, Customs not only lacks basic resources, they also lack 1990s technology. A Colombian go-fast boat can go between 80 and 90 miles per hour, while the few Customs go-fast boats that are available only top about 70 miles per hour. So not only does Customs lack resources in general, they lack the state-of-the-art equipment needed to match those of the drug lords.

On my most recent trip, I visited the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force located in Key West, FL. This is the primary hub for detection, monitoring, and interdiction efforts. During these visits, I saw firsthand that our government agencies there—and there are many—have tremendous monitoring and detection capability, and they are doing a good job. They can detect when a small, drug-carrying aircraft is leaving Colombia and making the journey across the Caribbean.

Unfortunately, however, while we may have the capability to detect and monitor drug trafficking in the Caribbean airspace, we do not have adequate resources and capabilities for the end game—the actual seizing of illegal drugs in transit. And the drug lords know this. For example, I was informed that of the total drug air events in the Bahamas from April of 1997 until April 1998, our U.S. agents state that there was only an 8-percent success rate of stopping drug air flights that have been detected—8 percent. That means approximately 92 percent got away. And though cocaine seizures are up, their concern is the higher amounts seized represent probably a fraction of the total amount of drugs coming through the area.

While in Key West, I was also briefed on specific interdiction efforts in the eastern Pacific. I was surprised to find out that in the eastern Pacific, off the coast of Mexico and Central America,

up this region that is cut off on the map, the coast is virtually, literally clear for drug lords to do their business. Mr. President, this is simply not acceptable.

The U.S. Government—and I am talking about us—is not effectively dealing with this increasingly large threat in the Eastern Pacific. We have virtually no presence because of the lack of funding. I was briefed about an operation called Caper Focus, which would have focused on interdiction efforts in the area. We would have had a number of surface assets and aircraft to patrol the waters and interdict. This operation, unfortunately, was canceled before it started because of a Department of Defense decision to send the needed surface assets elsewhere. To date, this issue has not been resolved, and the coastal waters in the Eastern Pacific are open for drug business.

Mr. President, our men and women who work on interdiction matters on a daily basis are committed to success, but they are not getting the support that they really need from us. Because of limited resources, we are selectively spending resources—a little bit here and a little bit there, a little bit at a time, and in different places. This, of course, has tremendous negative consequences.

With more limited resources, we could seal off one or two of the so-called "drug corridors," but the reality is that drug routes are constantly in flux, as the traffickers always seek to exploit the chinks in the armor of law enforcement. This phenomenon has been compared to the squeezing of a balloon—squeezing it at one end and it pops out on the other. That is the problem we have constantly run into in this antidrug effort. When we step up efforts in one area, like squeezing a balloon on one end, the traffickers just move to another area.

Let me give my colleagues an example of this. On one of my recent trips I saw that, in particular, Haiti has become an attractive rest-stop on the cocaine highway. Haiti is strategically located about halfway between the source country—Colombia—and the destination country—right here in the United States. Haitian law enforcement, though slowly getting better, is really unequipped to put a dent in the drug trade. What's more, their coast guard fleet, while it is improving and we are working with it, consists of a handful of boats. And as it is the poorest country in the hemisphere, by far, Haiti is extremely vulnerable to the kind of bribery and corruption that the drug trade needs in order to flourish. It is not surprising that the level of drugs moving through Haiti has dramatically increased.

According to a U.S. Government interagency assessment on cocaine movement, in 1996, between 5 and 8 percent of the cocaine coming into the U.S. passed through Haiti. By the third quarter of 1997, the percentage jumped 12 percent, and then it increased to 19 percent by the end of that year.

Mr. President, accordingly, because of that, we responded to this crisis with a military operation called Operation Frontier Lance. Operation Frontier Lance utilized Coast Guard cutters, speedboats, and helicopters to detect and capture drug dealers on a 24-hour per day basis. Incidentally, Mr. President, this operation was modeled after another successful interdiction effort off the coast of Puerto Rico, called Operation Frontier Shield. However, unfortunately, funding for Frontier Lance ran out and the operation just ceased. In fact, it ceased on Monday of this week. I had the opportunity to be on one of the cutters that was off the coast of Haiti and talk to the men and women who were so proud of the tremendous job they were doing. This potential roadblock on the cocaine highway is no more. Again, it ceased to exist this past Monday. The reality also is that Coast Guard funding has been slashed in the past several years. I think this is a mistake.

It is my hope that by passing the Coverdell-Craig amendment, we can jump start Operation Frontier Lance, and other similar programs. We need to get back into the game.

Now, Mr. President, our first and best resource in this antidrug effort, of course, is people. We are lacking in personnel in areas where we need it the most. Of the more than 100 U.S. drug enforcement agents authorized to be in the Caribbean, I was surprised to find only one agent in Haiti last March when I visited. Since my March visit, the DEA has agreed to add six more agents; that is clearly the direction in which we ought to go. But we also need additional manpower, men and women, to go to the Dominican Republic, and other areas of the Caribbean as well.

Mr. President, as I mentioned earlier, one of the major problems regarding our current interdiction efforts is that we are using scarce resources sparingly. The drug traffickers know that if we place resources in one or two selective places, they will just switch their routes and go elsewhere. A more logical approach, more funding permitting, would be to have more manpower and resources at different key places at the same time; or, in other words, "squeeze the balloon" at different ends—all at the same time. I believe that we can do that by passing the Coverdell-Craig amendment. That is why I support this timely amendment.

Mr. President, I believe it is time to rededicate ourselves to an effective interdiction strategy. A lot of good work is now going on. But we can do a lot more and we can do better. I have had the opportunity to see our efforts firsthand. We are competing with an enemy that has increased its resources to do the job, while we tragically have cut our resources by more than half. Having said that, I also believe that we must have a clear idea what we should expect with increased funding. In short, we need to ascertain from the relevant agencies, whether it be from

the Navy, Coast Guard, Customs, DEA, FBI, or whatever the agency may be, what we can expect to accomplish with more resources, and we have to look to them to tell us what they think they can do. I believe it is our obligation to give them those resources and to give them the direction. My point is that we need to make sure that the Government agencies have the necessary amount of money and that they indeed strictly use the funds for counter-narcotics efforts.

Again, I want to commend my friend from Georgia, Senator COVERDELL, as well as Senator CRAIG, for their efforts in this regard, their efforts in combating the drug threat both within and beyond our borders. I look forward to working with them and other colleagues on this important, new initiative.

In conclusion, let me just say again how important I believe it is that we pass the McCain bill. It has been a struggle. No one should have expected it not to be a struggle. This is a big bill. It is comprehensive legislation. It is tough sledding. We knew that when we started. But we should not be discouraged. The stakes, I think, are very high. What are the stakes? The stakes are whether or not we are going to seize this historic opportunity to pass legislation that will, in fact, have a significant impact on reducing the number of young people who start smoking every day. The consequence of this legislation will affect not only young people today, it is going to impact our society for years and years to come. So we should continue, we should push on, and we should get the job done.

The amendment that I am speaking about this afternoon—I am sure we will be back on it again next week—which was brought to the floor by Senator COVERDELL, is an amendment that I believe will improve the McCain bill. It will improve it by taking some of the resources from the bill and using it in the antidrug effort, using it on drug interdiction, which I believe is so urgently needed. With some additional resources, I am convinced that the men and women who I have had the chance in the last several years to meet with, to see, that are on the front lines, along our borders—and I have had the chance to visit our borders—as well as in the Caribbean and other areas, I believe they can get the job done.

I believe that they can impact the drug trade. They can only do it though if we are willing to give them the resources and give them the backing to allow them to do that job.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL DRUG COURT WEEK

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I begin my statement today thanking the various individuals and organizations that support the drug court programs. I have always been a strong supporter of drug court, and wish to express my pleasure with the "National Drug Court Week" events that are scheduled in Washington, DC this week. Recognizing the importance of practitioners who work on drug courts and the significant contributions that drug courts have made, and continue to make, in reducing drug use and crime in our communities is extremely important. I believe in the success of the drug courts and wish to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of drug court professionals.

Drug Courts are revolutionizing the criminal justice system. The strategy behind drug courts departs from traditional criminal justice practice by placing nonviolent drug abusing offenders into intensive court supervised drug treatment instead of prison. Some drug courts target first time offenders, while others concentrate on habitual offenders. They all aim to reduce drug abuse and crime.

Drug court programs have expanded from the original 12 in 1994 to around 400 today. Drug courts provide comprehensive judicial monitoring, drug testing and supervision, treatment and rehabilitative services, and sanctions and incentives for drug using offenders. The success of the drug court system is well documented. More than 70% of drug court clients have successfully completed the program or remain as active participants. Additionally, the cost of drug court programs are significantly less than the cost of incarceration and traditional court systems.

In my home state of Colorado the drug court movement is growing. Started in 1994, the Denver Drug Court assigns defendants to one of three tracks. Tracks 1 and 2 are community supervision and treatment tracks. Track 3 is a serious offender incarceration track. These tracks establish the different type of programs that are offered to various offenders.

Approximately 75% of all drug cases are appropriate for the community supervision track. At any given time, approximately 1500 cases are under court supervision. An analysis of post-conviction progress reviews of offenders under Track 1 or Track 2 demonstrates that 67% of those individuals complied with the Drug Court Program and did not use any illegal substances. Since the graduation of the first class in July 1995, the Drug Court has successfully graduated over 500 individuals. Of the 100 graduates who have been out of the Drug Court for one year or longer, only 10% have been rearrested for a felony offense.

Last year, General McCaffrey and I had the opportunity to observe the Denver Drug Court. Through this experience I was able to see first hand the judicial procedures surrounding drug