

Detroit to Washington, DC. It turns out that there were over 20 commercial flights that day from here to Detroit and back. One could have sat them in first class and provided them Dr. Pepper in a paper cup, or whatever it is they do in first class, between Detroit and Washington, DC, and they would have been fine. But they flew down wing tip to wing tip in Gulfstreams and, you know, making \$2 million, \$2.5 million a month, whatever it was. There was a lot of criticism about it—justifiable, in my judgment. I want the auto industry to succeed, but that was not a very smart thing that day.

But the question is, Why it is just the auto industry? Where are all of those folks who ran some of those big investment banks into the ditch? Where are the folks who caused that wreckage? How about the people who ran these big mortgage companies that were selling these unbelievable mortgages to people with bad credit and getting big bonuses as a result? When are they going to be brought here under subpoena and asked the same questions and subject to the same requirements?

I think we ought to create a taxpayer protection prosecution task force. I believe there is a lot of illegal activity that has not been uncovered. And I do not think it ought to be laid at the feet of some attorney general someplace in some State. There ought to be a Federal prosecution tasks force empaneled, and that task force must make it a top priority to investigate and prosecute financial fraud cases and seek to recover any ill-gotten gains. The task force shall make recommendations to the Congress, within 60 days, about extending the statute of limitation in complicated financial crimes, if necessary.

There ought to be a reform commission on the financial system that determines the causes of this financial nightmare. And the commission would report its findings, conclusions and make recommendations for preventing a similar debacle in the future. I do not think it is just a matter of jump-starting the economic engine; I think you have to rewire the system here. You have to rewire the financial system. This does not work.

Securitizing instruments for which there was never any decent underwriting because you did not have to underwrite if you were going to send the risk upstairs—that does not work. And you cannot have dark money out there beyond the gaze of regulators.

You do have to regulate. It seems to me you have to completely reform the financial system, and I do think the people who caused this wreck are going to be the ones who are going to help us reform the system.

So those are four areas that I think we have to do on behalf of the American taxpayer.

You know, my sense is that everyone in this country wants this new Government to succeed. President-elect Barack Obama campaigned across this

country on the subject of change. We all understand the need for that change. The fact is, there is plenty of blame to go around. Lots of folks, Republicans, Democrats, one administration, another—there is a lot of blame. But it seems to me there are special obligations laid at the feet of those who in the last 8 years have decided to be willfully blind and decided that self-regulation was more important than having people do their jobs who were supposed to be regulating. And the result was the creation of a house of cards or a Ponzi scheme sort of thing that has caused dramatic damage to this country.

Now, it is a mess, but I think this country can get out of it. I think it would be hard for anybody in this Chamber to decide to get up and go to work if they did not have an abiding hope about the future of this country. And I do. But that hope is joined, it seems to me, by requirements to find out what happened, take action based on what happened, and make sure it never happens again. That is not rocket science; that is what we are obligated to do.

This is, as I said, a great country with a wonderful history of overcoming the odds. We have people who came to this country from different parts of the planet searching for opportunity. Most of us come from immigrants who came from one part of the planet or another, one part of this globe, and came to this country because they believed this is the place where opportunity existed.

There was a man named Stanley Newberg who died, and there was a tiny little piece written in the New York Times about him some years ago. It was a piece that intrigued me, so I looked into it to find out what was this about, Stanley Newberg. It said, in this one-paragraph piece, something that I discovered more about. A man came to this country with his parents to flee the persecution by the Nazis of the Jews, and they came here and landed in this country, with nothing, in New York City. His dad had a job peddling fish on the Lower East Side of New York, and Stanley Newberg trailed along, this little tyke with his dad every day peddling fish. Then he went to school, and his parents struggled because they had nothing, and he did well in school. They struggled to get him some loans and try to help him get to college. He went to college, graduated from college, and went to work for an aluminum company. He did very well with the company and rose up to management in the company and then purchased the company.

Later, he died. When they opened his will, Stanley Newberg, in his will, left \$5.7 million to the United States of America. In his will, he said: For the privilege of living in that great country. Is that not remarkable? Here is a man who came here with nothing, was enormously successful, then at the end of his life left his inheritance to the United States of America. I am not

suggesting everyone do that. I am suggesting it inspires me when people—in this case, coming here as a boy with nothing—understand the magic of what this country of ours offers in terms of opportunity and freedom. And I think, with all of the hand-wringing that exists in our country about these very serious troubles we face, I am absolutely convinced, if we work together, with a new President, a new Government, if we call the American people to be part of something bigger than themselves, to say this is a moment to try to put this country back on track and build better opportunity and greater opportunity for all Americans, I have great hope then for this country.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of S. 22, the public lands omnibus bill. This legislation contains several important provisions for the State of Florida that will protect its natural treasures and expand understanding of our rich history. These bills are bipartisan, and I am proud to have worked with my colleague Senator BILL NELSON in support of the Everglades provisions and the commission for the 450th anniversary of St. Augustine's founding. Congressman JOHN MICA has introduced a companion version of this bill in the House of Representatives and I wanted to recognize his efforts as well. In addition, I thank the hard work of Senator JEFF BINGAMAN, the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and ranking member, Senator MURKOWSKI, and their staff, for including these bills in S. 22 and bringing it to expected floor passage.

The public lands package contains an authorization for the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Commission, which is critical in assisting the National Park Service, the State of Florida, as well as all local stakeholders in organizing the historic celebration of the city's founding. St. Augustine's old and complex history mirrors much of the American experience. It was the birthplace of Christianity in the New World and it was truly the first blending-pot of cultures that included peoples of Spanish, English, French, Native American, and African descent. Many do not know that St. Augustine is the location of the first parish mass in the United States and it was the location of the first free black settlement in North America. Nearly a century before the founding of Jamestown, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon landed off the coast of St. Augustine looking for the fabled Fountain of Youth but instead founded a colony known as La Florida. He discovered very favorable currents that would later be known as the Gulf Stream, which would serve as trade routes for European explorers to discover other parts of the New World.

Because of St. Augustine's location along strategic trade routes, Spain constructed the Castillo de San Marcos in 1672 to protect the capital of La Florida from French and British interests. The Castillo de San Marcos is

built on the ruins of the original fort that was burned to the ground by British sailor and explorer Sir Francis Drake. The fort still stands today and has had six different flags fly above its ramparts. It is the oldest surviving European fortification in the United States.

The St. Augustine Commemoration Commission is necessary to help organize the tremendous amount of historical and cultural events that will take place in the first coast area. The commission will encompass a broad array of members from Federal, State, local, and academic backgrounds to ensure that it has a diverse make-up of professionals to assist the city of St. Augustine in celebrating its founding. The intent of the St. Augustine commission bill is to assist the NPS and local stakeholders in building upon the experiences of the Jamestown celebration in 2007. In addition, the commission would provide the necessary framework to navigate the significant logistical challenges facing the city of St. Augustine, the State of Florida, and the National Park Service.

Restoration of the Everglades, especially Everglades National Park, will be enhanced by enactment of the public lands bills package, S. 22. One such provision included is section 7107, which would expand the boundaries of Everglades National Park by nearly 600 acres and help protect a critical part of Florida's ecological heritage. I am proud to have cosponsored this legislation with my colleague BILL NELSON, and it is supported by a broad group of stakeholders including the Monroe County government in the Florida Keys, the Nature Conservancy, and the National Park Service. The passage of this bill would protect coastal wetlands and habitat for a myriad of endangered species including the American crocodile, the West Indian manatee, the wood stork, the roseate spoonbill, and other migrating birds.

The citizens of Florida have long treasured the Everglades, and the addition of this property within the park's boundaries will help preserve the unique beauty that makes the keys such a special place. The addition of the Tarpon Basin property will not place new management or administrative burdens on our park's staff, but instead would enhance and preserve a part of Old Florida for years to come.

Another provision included in S. 22, which Senator NELSON and I support would facilitate an important land exchange to allow the National Park Service to acquire the last significant private inholding in the Everglades and clear the way to finally implement the federally approved Modified Waters Delivery Project or "Mod Waters." Mod Waters will help restore natural water flows into Everglades National Park, and although authorized nearly 20 years ago in 1989, it has experienced substantial delays.

The land trade provided for in the pending, measure enables the Park

Service to acquire Florida Power and Light's, FPL, 7-mile long, utility corridor that now bisects the expanded Everglades National Park. This corridor runs north-south through the heart of the East Everglades and Shark River Slough, which provides the primary water flows into the park. Under the exchange, FPL would give this 320 acre inholding to the park and would receive roughly 260 acres on the eastern boundary of the park adjacent to the existing L 31 canal and levee. FPL would also receive a vegetative management easement to help control non-native exotic plants. Public acquisition of the FPL inholding would eliminate the last significant private inholding delaying Mod Waters.

No funds will be needed for this inholding acquisition and appraisals indicate that the park receives more value than FPL. Since so much preliminary work has been put into identifying the precise lands and interests involved in the exchange, the Park Service should be able to promptly complete the appraisal approval process. Expedient review is critical to facilitate Mod Waters and ensure that the exchange is executed so taxpayers are spared the multimillion-dollar costs of purchasing the FPL corridor.

Substantial work has already been completed and all evaluations indicate that relocating the utility corridor away from the Everglades National Park will provide a wide array of environmental benefits to the park. The exchange and relocation ensures that there will be no electric transmission lines constructed on the existing private right-of-way. In addition, moving the utility corridor to the periphery of the park to developed property will lessen impacts on resources, endangered and threatened species, and other park-related values. The bill also provides the NPS with the authority to relocate the Everglades Park boundary to ensure that the lands conveyed to FPL are outside of the park. The intent is that the relocated utility corridor not be within Everglades Park.

Since an environmental assessment needs to focus only on those factors arising from the land exchange itself, it is expected that the Park Service will move quickly to complete the assessment. Any effects that may arise from future proposed development of the relocated corridor would be subject to full environmental review at that time by appropriate Federal and State agencies. Because of these protections and oversight, there should be no undue regulatory delay in the completion of this important land exchange, which could further delay Mod Waters. Accordingly, the NPS should act in a timely manner to render a suitability finding for lands adjacent to the park used for transmission to meet the power needs of south Florida.

I again thank Chairman BINGAMAN and Senator MURKOWSKI for including these bills in S. 22. I also want to thank our outgoing ranking member, Pete

Domenici, for his hard work in helping move these bills through the Energy and Natural Resources Committee last year. We have a chance at the beginning of a new Congress to show the American people that Washington is not all about politics and gridlock. I urge my colleagues to vote for S. 22 to help facilitate the completion of Mod Waters and enhance the protection of Florida's fragile ecosystem.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, restoration of America's Everglades is one of my top priorities in the Senate. Everglades National Park stands to be enhanced by enactment of the public lands bill package, S. 22.

Section 7107 contains a measure—similar to a bill introduced by Senator MEL MARTINEZ and me, to facilitate an important land exchange which will allow the National Park Service to acquire the last significant private inholding in the East Everglades and clear the way to finally implement the congressionally approved Modified Waters Delivery project or "Mod Waters." Mod Waters will help restore natural water flows into Everglades Park. This project provides a critical foundation for many future restoration projects and although it was authorized in 1989, has been delayed for a variety of reasons including the need to acquire private lands that will be returned to a natural state by increased water flows.

The Park Service has worked painstakingly since 1989 to acquire over 100,000 acres in the East Everglades at a cost of more than \$104 million to clear the way for Mod Waters. Over 8000 individual parcels of land have been purchased and added to Everglades National Park. The land trade provided for in the pending measure will enable the park to acquire Florida Power and Light's—FPL—7-mile long, 330-foot wide inholding that now bisects the expanded park. This corridor of private lands runs north-south through the heart of the East Everglades and Shark River Slough, which provides the primary water flows into the park—the area where more natural water flows will be restored by Mod Waters. Under the exchange, FPL would surrender this 320-acre inholding to the park and receive approximately 260 acres on the eastern periphery of the park immediately adjacent to the existing L 31 canal and levee as well as a vegetative management easement to help control nonnative exotic plants among others. Public acquisition of the FPL inholding would eliminate the last significant private inholding delaying Mod Waters. In return, FPL would receive lands that would be outside the park, providing it with the opportunity to develop such lands into a viable utility corridor, if approved. This is a win-win for the people of south Florida who depend upon both a healthy environment and the availability of power.

As I stated earlier, Mod Waters is the foundation for the broader Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, CERP, approved by Congress in the

FPL
EXCHANGE

Water Resources Development Act of 2000. The congressionally mandated September 2008 National Academy of Sciences report on Everglades restoration called progress on Mod Waters "dismal." The report emphasized that Mod Waters is critical to restoration, especially for Everglades Park, and urged the Federal Government to take action to move the project along. This exchange does precisely that.

No funds will be needed for this inholding acquisition. Since so much work has already been done to identify the precise lands and interests in land to be exchanged and these lands have been subject to professional appraisals, we expect the park to be able to promptly complete the necessary administrative requirements to complete the exchange. Time is of the essence in order to facilitate Mod Waters and ensure that the exchange is executed so taxpayers are spared the multi-million dollar costs of purchasing the FPL corridor.

Prior to executing the land trade, the Park Service will prepare the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act document to fully understand the environmental impacts, if any. It is my hope that this exchange will provide a wide array of environmental benefits to the park. The exchange ensures that there will be no electric transmission lines constructed on the existing private right-of-way. The bill also provides the Service with the authority to relocate the Everglades Park boundary to ensure that the lands conveyed to FPL are outside of the park. It is intended that the utility corridor, if developed, not be within Everglades Park. Because many of the agreements have been worked out in advance between FPL and the park, I expect that the Park Service will move expeditiously to complete the land exchange authorized by this legislation.

In a similar vein, the Park Service must also make a determination that the lands and interests along the L 31 canal and levee on the edge of the park are "suitable" for exchange and conveyance to FPL. This "suitability" is already widely acknowledged and recognized by both the agency and the Congress as these peripheral lands are not in the heart of the park and not critical for Mod Waters and water flow restoration. Accordingly, I expect the Park Service to act in a timely manner to render the suitability finding.

I received a letter from Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary, Mike Sole, expressing his support for the land transfer. The exchange is also supported by the Department of the Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers.

I expect the Park Service and FPL to move promptly to complete the exchange. Again, the need for action on Mod Waters means that time is of the essence.

I wish to thank Chairman BINGAMAN and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for their efforts to incorporate this impor-

tant measure in the S. 22 package. We must move expeditiously to compete Mod Waters and completion of this land exchange will help us achieve these objectives while ensuring that the taxpayers are spared the cost of purchasing a very expensive park inholding from FPL.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF LULAC

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of the Senate to the 80th anniversary of the League of United Latin American Citizens, LULAC. As a pioneer of the Latino civil rights movement, LULAC has long fought to better the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Americans of Latino descent.

Eighty years ago, three organizations in south Texas united to combat the rampant discrimination faced by Mexican Americans. After decades of disenfranchisement, the Latino community in south Texas created a movement for equality that has contributed greatly to enhancing the livelihood of Latinos throughout the United States. LULAC's successes and achievements are many—ranging from the desegregation of schools throughout the American Southwest to improving access to jobs and government programs.

Today, as America's oldest national Latino organization, LULAC boasts continued service to America's Latino population through more than 48 employment training centers, 16 regional centers, and employs its great knowledge of the needs of the Latino community by advising private, nonprofit, and public institutions. Moreover, its unique charter structure allows this organization to disseminate important information and provide worthwhile services via more than 600 councils throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The need for LULAC's services has not subsided through the years and a new generation of Latinos calls upon the institutional strength that this organization can provide. The

challenges we face as a nation can only be resolved by the inclusion of all American communities and I value the sage voice of LULAC on the strategies to empower Latino communities.

The organization's early efforts for political and social inclusion created a strong base which LULAC and other organizations now utilize to improve the quality of life for all American Latinos. I congratulate and commend the League of United Latin American Citizens for their long record of service to the Latino community and wish them continued success.

TRIBUTE TO BOURBON HEIGHTS NURSING HOME

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Bourbon Heights Nursing Home, which was recently recognized as the best nursing home in the State in 2008 by the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities, KAHCF.

Recently, the Bourbon County Citizen in Paris, KY, published a story about the Bourbon Heights Nursing Home receiving this top honor.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the work of the dedicated staff and volunteers at Bourbon Heights, whose continued commitment to the community and to those they care for is extraordinary. I further ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Bourbon County Citizen, Dec. 19, 2008]

BOURBON HEIGHTS RECEIVES STATE AWARD (By Paul Gibson)

The Bourbon Heights Nursing Home was the recipient of the coveted award recognizing them as the best nursing home in the state by the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities (KAHCF). There are 247 nursing homes in the association and each one is awarded the large trophy that signifies the top honor.

"There is an extensive application procedure," said Glenda McKenzie, Activities Director. "And judges come at least twice during the year to personally see the facility."

"The judges' visit is very thorough," said Angie Forsythe, Administrator at Bourbon Heights. "They interview each department head and observe the services we provide residents."

According to Forsythe, the judges also interview staff members, residents, and volunteers to gain better understanding of how the facility operates.

"The judges really wanted to know what makes us unique," Forsythe said.

The judges discovered, McKenzie said, "that we are a very diverse facility offering a wide range of services to our residents."

Currently, Bourbon Heights provides independent living in apartments, personal care, nursing care, day care and out patient rehabilitation.

"I think the judges were impressed with the way we take pride in the care we provide our residents," Forsythe said. "We are like a family here and the staff provides a loving care for each resident."

She added that Bourbon Heights has very little turnover in staff and that many staff