

contributions made by foster parents. On April 26, Governor Rod Blagojevich proclaimed May 2004 "Foster Parent Appreciation Month." The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is the Nation's largest child welfare agency accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services.

Illinois DCFS is working to reduce the number of children who require foster care. Through a program called Front End Redesign, early intervention services are provided to families after their needs become apparent to prevent the need for a child to be placed in foster care. For four consecutive years, Illinois has been a national leader in adoptions. With an increasing emphasis on early intervention and adoption, the number of Illinois children in foster care has declined from 51,331 children in 1997 to 19,297 children in 2004.

We still have a great demand—not only in Illinois but in States across the Nation—for additional caring adults to open their homes to foster children. Teenagers, adolescent moms and their babies, children with special needs, and sibling groups are some of the children most in need of foster and adoptive parents.

All children can reach their greatest potential when they live in safe, stable, and nurturing families. Yet far too many children lack this fundamental foundation. Foster parents, as well as the professionals and volunteers working within state child welfare programs, deserve our gratitude and respect for the sacrifices they make every day to ensure that our children—our Nation's future—receive the support they need as they mature into adulthood.●

#### RECOGNITION OF DR. CHARLES IRVIN HUDSON

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, like so many of the people who were fortunate enough to know him, I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of a dear friend and true leader, Dr. Charles Irvin Hudson. Dr. Hudson, known to many affectionately as "Doc," died unexpectedly May 7, 2004, at Our Lady of the Lake Hospital in Baton Rouge, LA, at the age of 72.

Doc Hudson was an educator and community leader in St. Landry Parish for nearly 50 years. He demonstrated his commitment to education by serving as a high school mathematics teacher for 10 years and later as the principal of two elementary schools, for which he received numerous awards and honors.

But Doc Hudson was equally committed to public service, and served his community as an elected official for nearly 30 years. First elected to the Opelousas City Council in 1974, he was to serve for three consecutive 4-year terms before becoming deputy secretary for the Louisiana State Department of Transportation and Development from 1984-88. Doc Hudson was

then elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1991 where he served till his passing.

Throughout his remarkable career, Doc worked tirelessly for the people of St. Landry Parish and the State of Louisiana. He fought for both decency and accountability in our schools, worked to improve the quality of life for everyone in District 40, and developed warm, quality relationships with all who met him.

It was my privilege to have worked very closely with Doc on a number of occasions and to benefit from the wisdom of his counsel and the breadth of his understanding. I am honored to have known and learned from a man of such high moral character.

Representative Hudson will be remembered for his nearly 30 years of service in public life and 20 years as an educator, and for the great value he placed on developing relationships with people. He rooted his work in his personal experiences with the people affected by the issues. His dedication to people will stand as a legacy from which future generations will learn.

On behalf of the entire State of Louisiana, I pay tribute to this courageous statesman and convey my most respectful condolences to his family and to all who knew him.●

#### H-2B VISA CRISIS

● Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, today I would like to discuss my disappointment with the failure to address an issue of critical importance to small businesses around the country—the need to consider legislation temporarily raising the cap on the number of H-2B visas for this fiscal year.

As many of my colleagues know after hearing from their constituents, the limit on the number of H-2B visas that could be issued this fiscal year was reached in early March. The H-2B cap was reached less than halfway through the current fiscal year and has caused critical problems around the country. This is especially true for those small businesses that rely on H-2B visas to completely fill their staffing needs over the summer months. A business may apply for a H-2B visa no sooner than 120 days before the individual is needed for employment, and the cap was reached as businesses were applying for their summer positions.

I quickly heard from many Vermont businesses expressing their concerns about not being able to obtain these needed workers, and I was pleased to join Senator KENNEDY in introducing the Save the Summer Act on March 29, 2004. This commonsense approach would raise the cap on H-2B visas for this fiscal year by 40,000. This is a simple, straightforward, easy-to-understand-and-implement solution to this problem. I was pleased that the bill had bipartisan support when it was introduced and I was hopeful that it could be considered and passed quickly in the Senate. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

The next day, on March 30, Senator HATCH introduced the Summer Operations and Services Relief and Reform Act that addressed the H-2B cap problem in a different manner. While I felt that this legislation addressed the problem in a less clear, more complicated way, I was very pleased that the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, Senator HATCH, and the Judiciary Committee's Immigration Subcommittee chairman, Senator CHAMBLISS, recognized that there was a problem that had to be immediately addressed.

In the normal legislative process, the next step should have been for the two sides to sit down and try to work through the differences between the bills and then quickly pass legislation to solve this problem. However, in this case, the Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee were not in agreement on how to address the matter and began to negotiate among themselves. Unfortunately, they chose not to negotiate with the supporters of the Save the Summer Act until they had reached a consensus. Supposedly, more than a month after the bill was introduced, the Republicans finally reached an agreement amongst themselves.

Although the majority reached a consensus, the business community and the Department of Homeland Security raised concerns about the Republican agreement. Thus, the Republicans have gone back to the drawing board and are once again negotiating amongst themselves.

It is now the day before the Senate will take its break for the Memorial Day holiday. Many think of Memorial Day weekend as the unofficial beginning of summer. However, almost 2 months after legislation had been introduced, businesses around the country that were counting on the Congress to solve this problem still do not have an answer. Summer may have begun, but for many businesses, this summer season will not be something to celebrate.

Senator KENNEDY and I introduced a simple, easy solution to this problem on March 29 that would have allowed businesses to obtain the employees they desperately need for the summer, while giving the Congress the opportunity to address the long-term issues with the H-2B program. However, the Republican leadership will not allow the Senate to pass this legislation with an overwhelming vote.

It has been almost 2 months since legislation was introduced, almost 3 months since the problem arose, and the Republicans are still debating the issue internally. The Senate should pass the Save the Summer Act immediately and help our Nation's small businesses.●

#### HONORING RETIRING TEACHERS

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to honor five outstanding