proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business for the filing of a cloture motion on the motion to proceed to S. 2739, and once this has been done, the Senate then return to H. R. 3221.

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

CONSOLIDATED NATURAL RESOURCES ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask that we move to proceed to Calendar No. 616, the Forest Service, Departments of Interior and Energy resources bill, and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 616, S. 2739, Forest Service, Departments of Interior and Energy Resources bill.

Jeff Bingaman, Ron Wyden, Ken Salazar, Maria Cantwell, Mark L. Pryor, Daniel K. Akaka, Blanche L. Lincoln, Tim Johnson, Jon Tester, Christopher J. Dodd, Carl Levin, Richard Durbin, Wayne Allard, Byron L. Dorgan, Joseph Lieberman, Mary L. Landrieu, Harry Reid.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. REID. I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

NEW DIRECTION FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT AND THE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION TAX ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will continue with the consideration of H.R. 3221.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, there are at least one or two other Members who may come to the floor to talk about this bill or maybe even offer some ideas they intend to propose next week when we reconvene. I thought it might be worthwhile at the end of this week—which has been a busy week, obviously, and one where a lot of attention for the first time in a long time has been focused on the most critical economic issue we face, and that is the foreclosure crisis—to restate where we are.

As many of my colleagues know, I began this process almost a year ago when we convened the stakeholders across the country on a bipartisan basis, I might add, in the Senate Banking Committee to talk about the foreclosure crisis—that was March of last year—resulting in a set of principles we adopted jointly that would make it possible for workouts of these mortgages that would make it possible for more Americans facing foreclosures to stay in their homes. That was the goal as we began last spring when this emerged as a growing problem.

I felt then, and it has been confirmed over the last number of months, that this was not a minor issue, that it was not going to go away or likely to be contained very quickly. Unfortunately, that has proven to be just the case.

Today, we are looking at economic statistics that point to a difficult time. We are in a recession. I know it has not been declared formally yet, maybe Washington hasn't called it that yet, but if you are out there trying to feed your family, put fuel in your automobile, pay your mortgage, pay your child's college tuition or anything else, you are watching inflation at the highest rates it has been in years, and we are watching unemployment numbers continue to rise. The fiscal picture of our country is the worst it has been in years, with the national debt now reaching some $9 trillion, a staggering sum of money accumulated over the last 5 or 6 years. The value of the dollar is the lowest it has been since we allowed our currency to float back in the early 1970s.

Every major economic indicator points to what difficulty our country is in, and this crisis has been compounded and exacerbated by a foreclosure crisis. That is the center of this issue, the foreclosure crisis. So everything we should be doing should be designed to try to offer relief in that sector. If we do that, then I believe we can take a major step forward in getting us back on track again and, hopefully, this recession will not last long and people's confidence and optimism can begin to rise.

This is the first time we have dealt with this issue in any comprehensive way at all in the last year. There have been a number of other bills that have been brought to the floor that have made some contribution to this issue. But this is the first time we have actually had a day or two to debate the housing crisis and to offer some ideas on resolution of that issue.

I want to add, as quickly as I can, that anyone who thinks this bill is the end-all is making a huge mistake. This bill is a step in the right direction, it is a positive one and a good one, but there are key missing ingredients. Why is that the case? That is the case because, candidly, we weren't able to get any debate going at all unless we could develop some consensus around several provisions on which there would be little or no debate, some core issues, and then open the process for some additional ideas, as we have seen over the last few days, with various amendments that have been offered and considered already. But it is a step in the right direction. It does not include the kind of fundamental relief for those in foreclosure or about to go into foreclosure and offering them some escape from losing their homes.

So while I welcome the steps we are taking, I would be the first to admit and tell my colleagues that we have yet to really address the underlying problem; that is, how do we keep people in their homes? In fact, we will have a hearing next week, Mr. President, on the very idea that has now been circulating over several months and that I proposed back several months ago—that has also been embraced, I might point out, by the chairman of the Financial Services Committee of the other body. I am pleased to say that there are a number of Members here, both Republicans and Democrats, who, while they have not signed on to a bill, have been extremely encouraging in terms of their support for this idea. So I hope in the coming days to be able to finalize a proposal and bring it to the floor that would, for the first time, offer some very meaningful direct relief to the people who are facing foreclosure—some 8,000 a day.

We talk in numbers here of billions of dollars and millions of people, trillions of dollars. The language gets beyond the grasp of most people to understand. But I think everyone can understand when I tell you that almost 8,000 people a day are going into foreclosure. Over the last 2 or 3 days we have been debating this bill on the floor, some 24,000 of our fellow citizens are finding themselves in danger of losing the most important possession they have outside of their families, and that is their home. And every day we wait, every day we delay, every day we procrastinate, every day we talk about something other than the core issue affecting our economy, more and more Americans run the risk of being in that statistic of losing their homes. And it isn't just them, because for every foreclosure that occurs in a square block, the value of every other home in that neighborhood declines as well. So while people are saying: Well, I am not in foreclosure, I am not likely to be there, but my neighbors are, you are affected by it. We know that values decline by as much as 1 percent of median if one of your neighbors watches their property go into foreclosure, if it ends up being boarded up or in deteriorating condition. Crime rates go up. So there is a ripple effect to all of this, and hence the importance of addressing the underlying issue of how do we keep people in their homes.

A lot of what we are talking about in this bill is how to deal with the properties once they are foreclosed. That is not an insignificant problem, and I welcome the opportunity to do something about it. But it seems to me that if we really wanted to address the issue, instead of how much money we can spend to rehabilitate foreclosed property or how much money we can get to mayors or county supervisors to clean up neighborhoods and to put them in better shape for possible resale, or to come up with a tax provision that will make that foreclosed property attractive to some future buyer, why not spend as much time seeing to it that we keep people, where we can, in their homes? That is what we are going to be offering in the coming days.

But there are some very good ideas in this proposal, so as we go into the weekend now, before we come back on Monday and Tuesday, I thought it might be worthwhile just to briefly encapsulate what has been accomplished and what is in this bill.

First of all, we provide $100 million for counseling services to help people stay in their homes. That is in addition to the $180 million already appropriated last year. Senator BOND and I offered that language, and it was adopted, and it has been a real asset to these organizations out there that assist people every day.

I had the privilege of meeting with some families in Connecticut a week or so ago who were facing foreclosure and would have been in foreclosure but for the intervention of these nonprofit organizations that were able to establish a workout with the lender and the borrower and have been able to keep people in their homes. So this is $280 million for this fiscal year. If you compare that to the $42 million that existed previously, it is a substantial increase.

Would I like more here? Absolutely. My colleague from the State of Washington, Senator MURRAY, and Senator SCHUMER wanted $200 million. I am not going to ever tell them I disagree with that, but in trying to put together a package here, the only amount of money the majority leader and I were able to get in that negotiation was to cut the difference and get $100 million for counseling. I am hopeful we can add some more to that in time, but at this juncture we have $100 million for it.

We have provided $4 billion to go to community development block grants specifically targeted to assist local governments to take a foreclosed property and put it in condition so it can be resold or used as rental housing. That idea is to try to make sure we don't end up with a lot more supply than we already have.

One of the reasons the market is not necessarily addressing this issue as comprehensively as we might like is because the supply of housing vastly exceeds demand. When you end up with people in foreclosure, you are adding to that supply. One of the reasons we ought to keep people in their homes is you then reduce that supply, and the normal economic market forces then would begin to assist us. That is where supply and demand get closer together and the market can help resolve some of this problem. By having foreclosed properties that grow worse, become abandoned, fall into disrepair, the value of other homes begins to decline in the neighborhood, and it makes it far more difficult to address this problem in the near or long term. So the $4 billion in community development block grants is designed to go to those communities and specifically give them help to see to it that these properties can get back on their feet.

The mortgage revenue bonds we are providing here as well, some $1.5 billion for mortgage revenue bonds, will help people refinance out of the lousy mortgages they got into. It is not as much as I would like, but it will assist people to get a better deal, a better mortgage than the one they have. That does make a difference for some of these people who are trying to come to a different economic circumstance than the one they are in. So it is not insignificant. I would have liked to have seen us do a bit more, but it will make a difference. So there is $1.6 billion in that area.

Veterans. I want to thank Senators KERRY, AKAKA, SANDERS, and I think Senator COLEMAN as well, if I am not mistaken, who were all involved in trying to do what we could to assist our men and women serving in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan and who are already under tremendous pressure, to make sure their properties are not foreclosed on underneath them while they are off in a desperate condition serving our country. Whether you agree or disagree with our policies, don't ever blame the soldier, the airman, the marine, the sailor out doing their job, and least of all they shouldn't be losing their homes in the process. So we provided for that in this legislation as well, and I thank my colleagues for those ideas.

We provided as well some assistance here for builders. I had some questions about this, I will be quite candid with my colleagues, and had I been writing this on my own, I am not sure I would have added those provisions. But there were those here who felt strongly about that, both Republicans and Democrats, and wanted to do something in the Tax Code to assist in these losses, to extend them over a longer period of time. It is in the bill. Again, I had some reservations about it, but, as my colleagues know, you don't write these things on your own, and if you are trying to put together a compromise package, the word ''compromise'' implies that you are going to accept some things you may not like and you are going to have some things tailored back that you want support for.

On Federal Housing Administration modernization, here we have raised the loan limits from $417,000 to $550,000. We also require that the downpayments will be as much as 3½ percent. That is a lot more than I would like, candidly. I wanted 1½ percent. But in order to get that additional $230,000 increase over the loan limits, where some 19 States, I might add, would have been disadvantaged—higher cost States or at least part of their States in higher cost—we had to agree on a compromise here and raising that number to 3½ percent. But that $550,000 under FHA will make a huge difference for many people who are looking again to refinance or to get mortgages they can afford. So it is a very valuable addition to this bill, and I welcome the opportunity to include that as well.

Those are some of the major provisions of what we have packaged. There will be additional amendments offered on Tuesday that will add to this, some of which or all of which may be adopted either by voice vote or recorded votes, but it is a step again in the right direction. It is action. It is movement on this issue.

Again, as I said, the bill doesn't in any way go far enough, in my view, to help the distressed borrowers, those who are living under the monthly threat of foreclosure, in fact the daily threat of foreclosure on their homes. So it is hardly a final action, but it is a first step and a major step in the right direction.

There was an idea that I had hoped to include in this bill and that I couldn't get agreement to bring as part of the bill. The danger of bringing it up as an amendment, Mr. President, is that I am concerned, because it is complicated, it might not carry, and therefore, with negative votes, it would be harder to bring it back. But as many will tell you here, the effort to try to restructure these mortgages could make a huge difference.

One of the problems we are having, of course, is that capital has seized up. It is not moving. How do you begin to get capital to flow in these markets? One certain way is to get some clear ideas of where the bottom, where the floor is in the residential mortgage market, and that is unclear as I speak. As long as it is unclear where that bottom is, then you are going to find people very reluctant to move capital into this area, or others, for that matter. This problem has spread far beyond the housing issue. It is now into student loans, car loans, and every other aspect of our economy is being affected by this.

So the idea—and it is not a new one; actually, it has been used in the past—is to try to see if we can come up with a scheme that would allow us to reduce or write down the value of these mortgages to some degree, thereby the lender would be getting less than they anticipated when they made the original mortgage, but they would end up getting something rather than a foreclosed property and nothing coming back. Secondly, the borrower would have to pay the insurance to FHA, which would guarantee this mortgage. They would also have to stay in the home. These residences would have to be owner occupied. It is a voluntary program both for the lender and the borrower. To the extent that value in the property increases, then money would come back to the Federal Government as a result of financing, through insurance, this instrument.

That is a rough idea of what it would do. The real value of it, aside from obviously helping people stay in their homes, is establishing that floor and that bottom. Anyone who is paying any attention to this issue at all will tell you that unless we address that issue—address that issue—we will be back here month after month after month in the coming years dealing with the effects of the problem, and that is money going to our cities to help them make foreclosed properties look better, and we will be doing things we can to help out people to somehow get through all of this. But if you really want to address the issue, then you have to confront the problem, and that is that capital is not moving.

The one thing we can do, of course, is to provide this kind of floor. You need to have enough transactions to determine that, but I believe that if we act quickly enough around here, we can make a difference in that area. And I will hold a hearing on this in the Banking Committee next week. We will have one additional hearing, at the request of Senator SHELBY and others, to examine this issue and fine-tune it. I am pleased a number of people here and outside of this body have indicated very strong support for this idea, cutting across the normal ideological lines that too often divide us, as something we ought to do.

I invite my colleagues to take a good look at this, or their staffs, over the weekend. I will submit, at the end of these remarks, a copy of the bill and its proposals, and I would strongly invite people to take a look at it, and any thoughts and ideas they have to strengthen this or improve it, I welcome. No one is claiming exclusive authorship of this idea. As I mentioned, it was tried during the Great Depression. In those days, the Federal Government actually purchased these very distressed mortgages at a very discounted rate and then arranged for that owner-occupied resident to stay in the home at a new rate. The Government actually made some $14 million on that program back in the Great Depression. We are not suggesting anything quite like that, although there are some similarities to it as a way of keeping people in their homes.

Anyway, I invite people to look at that idea because I think it does go right to the heart of what we are talking about. There are other ideas as well to try to strengthen this situation, but unless we do something like what I have suggested here, actually dealing with the 8,000 people a day who are falling into foreclosure, then this problem is only going to grow in its magnitude and the ability to provide some relief for people is going to grow far more expensive than it already is. That is the reason I am urging my colleagues to take a look at this idea to see if we can't, in the coming few days, complete a markup in the committee and then bring a bill to the floor that would really provide some meaningful and direct assistance to those who are facing this problem.

Look, I am not talking about speculators, Mr. President. That is a different crowd altogether. I feel bad that they have lost money, but we bear no moral obligation to help out a speculator. And I am worried about those who should never have gotten into a mortgage in the first place, but there is probably not a lot I can do about them except to help them in some ways.

We are talking about that large constituency in the middle, who were lured into very bad deals, were lured into arrangements they never could afford at the fully indexed rate. You could say they bear some responsibilities for having gone into those deals, and I do not disagree with that, but if you only were going to look at the foreclosed property you might draw that conclusion—we bear no responsibility to deal with the individual caught in those circumstances. But let me make a case to you if you are harboring those thoughts, why you might want to think differently about this. If you live in that neighborhood, if you live next-door or you live down the block or if your child does, in a new home, one they just bought, the value of every other property declines with one foreclosure in a neighborhood. That doesn't help anybody. We are watching housing values decline two consecutive years in a row. This is the first time that has happened since the Great Depression; sales are way off—all the related economic problems associated with a massive downturn in the housing area.

We may have as many as 50 million homes adversely affected by foreclosure. The number of foreclosures could be somewhere between 2.5 and 3 million homes in the country, but the number of homes affected by it is vastly in excess of the number of actual foreclosures. Those numbers on foreclosures may be low. It may be higher than that. We are hoping it will not be. But even if not, the ripple effect is going to be felt by everyone else in the area. If you are harboring the notion I don't care about my neighbor, I am sorry they got themselves into that mess, I feel badly for them, but I don't think we have any obligation to do anything about them at all, I remind you it will affect you—it affects all of us; hence, the necessity to address this issue and do everything we can to keep people in that home if we can.

We are all going to benefit from that. Our economy clearly would also benefit in a very specific way; people who live within that neighborhood will be benefited by our efforts to try to stabilize this situation and have better financial arrangements for those who otherwise are going to lose their homes.

That is where we are as we complete our business at the conclusion of this week. This bill has been a good week, I would say. This bill is not one that has everything we would like to have in it, but the good news is this: The Senate, for the first time in a year, is comprehensively trying to address this housing crisis. While you may not agree with everything we have done—you may be disappointed, as I am, that we do not have some provisions in here I would like to see included—the fact is we are debating, discussing and coming up with ideas and adopting them, to provide some relief for people in this area, as it should be.

I am grateful to Senator SHELBY, my colleague from Alabama, the former chairman of the Banking Committee. I am very grateful to the majority leader, Senator REID. When I talked to him last week before we came back, we both agreed this was an issue we had to pursue. He agreed and went out and sought out Senator MCCONNELL and created the kind of arrangement that allowed for Senator SHELBY and I to spend over 24 hours to package a proposal that could serve as the core coming forward. So we owe a deep debt of gratitude to the majority leader for insisting this be the debate this week, that we move forward next week and try to conclude our business, get together with the other body and resolve these matters and then come back with other ideas on how we can provide some real relief in this area.

I conclude by thanking him and his staff as well as our own staffs on the Banking Committee who worked through the night to try to come up with some compromises in these areas. It is always difficult to do it when you have 50 Members in a body with very strong ideas on where things ought to be. These people don't often get the recognition they deserve for spending the long hours and putting together these kinds of packages. I am grateful to the Senate Banking staff, Democrats and Republicans, for their efforts. My hope is next week we can conclude this and then come back again with some additional ideas that can truly make a difference.

I thank everyone for their involvement. I know there are several other people who want to come over and be heard on this subject matter, but in their absence, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WEBB). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 4406, AS FURTHER MODIFIED

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding adoption of amendment No. 4406, as modified, the amendment be further modified with the changes at the desk.

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

The amendment, as further modified, is as follows:

At the end of title VI, insert the following:

SEC. _____. ELECTION TO ACCELERATE AMT AND R AND D CREDITS IN LIEU OF BONUS DEPRECIATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 168(k), as amended by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) ELECTION TO ACCELERATE AMT AND R AND D CREDITS IN LIEU OF BONUS DEPRECIATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If a corporation which is an eligible taxpayer (within the meaning of paragraph (4)) for purposes of this subsection elects to have this paragraph apply—

''(i) no additional depreciation shall be allowed under paragraph (1) for any qualified property placed in service during any taxable year to which paragraph (1) would otherwise apply, and

''(ii) the limitations described in subparagraph (B) for such taxable year shall be increased by an aggregate amount not in excess of the bonus depreciation amount for such taxable year.

''(B) LIMITATIONS TO BE INCREASED.—The limitations described in this subparagraph are—

''(i) the limitation under section 38(c), and''(ii) ELIGIBLE QUALIFIED PROPERTY.—For purposes of clause (i), the term 'eligible qualified property' means qualified property under paragraph (2), except that in applying paragraph (2) for purposes of this clause—

''(iii) the limitation under section 53(c).

''(C) BONUS DEPRECIATION AMOUNT.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The bonus depreciation amount for any applicable taxable year is an amount equal to the product of 20 percent and the excess (if any) of—

''(I) the aggregate amount of depreciation which would be determined under this section for property placed in service during the taxable year if no election under this paragraph were made, over

''(II) the aggregate amount of depreciation allowable under this section for property placed in service during the taxable year.

In the case of property which is a passenger aircraft, the amount determined under subclause (I) shall be calculated without regard to the written binding contract limitation under paragraph (2)(A)(iii)(I).

''(ii) ELIGIBLE QUALIFIED PROPERTY.—For purposes of clause (i), the term 'eligible qualified property' means qualified property under paragraph (2), except that in applying paragraph (2) for purposes of this clause—

''(I) 'March 31, 2008' shall be substituted for 'December 31, 2007' each place it appears in subparagraph (A) and clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (E) thereof,

''(II) only adjusted basis attributable to manufacture, construction, or production after March 31, 2008, and before January 1, 2009, shall be taken into account under subparagraph (B)(ii) thereof, and

''(III) in the case of property which is a passenger aircraft, the written binding contract limitation under subparagraph (A)(iii)(I) thereof shall not apply.

''(iii) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The bonus depreciation amount for any applicable taxable year shall not exceed the applicable limitation under clause (iii), reduced (but not below zero) by the bonus depreciation amount for any preceding taxable year.

''(iv) APPLICABLE LIMITATION.—For purposes of clause (ii), the term 'applicable limitation' means, with respect to any eligible taxpayer, the lesser of—

''(I) $40,000,000, or

''(II) 10 percent of the sum of the amounts determined with respect to the eligible taxpayer under clauses (ii) and (iii) of subparagraph (D).

''(v) AGGREGATION RULE.—All corporations which are treated as a single employer under section 52(a) shall be treated as 1 taxpayer for purposes of applying the limitation under this subparagraph and determining the applicable limitation under clause (iii).

''(D) ALLOCATION OF BONUS DEPRECIATION AMOUNTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clauses (ii) and (iii), the taxpayer shall, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may prescribe, specify the portion (if any) of the bonus depreciation amount which is to be allocated to each of the limitations described in subparagraph (B).

''(ii) BUSINESS CREDIT LIMITATION.—The portion of the bonus depreciation amount allocated to the limitation described in subparagraph (B)(i) shall not exceed an amount equal to the portion of the credit allowable under section 38 for the taxable year which is allocable to business credit carryforwards to such taxable year which are—

''(I) from taxable years beginning before January 1, 2006, and

''(II) properly allocable (determined under the rules of section 38(d)) to the research credit determined under section 41(a).

''(iii) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX CREDIT LIMITATION.—The portion of the bonus depreciation amount allocated to the limitation described in subparagraph (B)(ii) shall not exceed an amount equal to the portion of the minimum tax credit allowable under section 53 for the taxable year which is allocable to the adjusted minimum tax imposed for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2006.

''(E) CREDIT REFUNDABLE.—Any aggregate increases in the credits allowed under section 38 or 53 by reason of this paragraph shall, for purposes of this title, be treated as a credit allowed to the taxpayer under subpart C of part IV of subchapter A.

''(F) OTHER RULES.—

''(i) ELECTION.—Any election under this paragraph (including any allocation under subparagraph (D)) may be revoked only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(ii) DEDUCTION ALLOWED IN COMPUTING MINIMUM TAX.—Notwithstanding this paragraph, paragraph (2)(G) shall apply with respect to the deduction computed under this section (after application of this paragraph) with respect to property placed in service during any applicable taxable year.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after December 31, 2007, in taxable years ending after such date.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM DICKINSON

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Congressman William Dickinson, who passed away on Monday, March 31, 2008. Bill was a skilled legislator and a personal friend, and along with the entire State of Alabama, I mourn his passing.

William Dickinson was born on June 5, 1925, in Opelika, AL. He served in the United States Navy during World War II and as a Major in the United States Air Force Reserves. In 1950, he obtained a law degree from the University of Alabama. He then practiced law for 2 years. In 1952, Bill began his career as an elected official, serving as a judge in city, juvenile, and circuit courts in Lee County. After his successful career as a judge, Bill was an executive for the Southern Railway. Bill also served on the Opelika Board of Education.

When Bill was elected to Congress in 1964, most of his constituents had never before been represented by a Republican. Nevertheless, Bill was elected to 14 consecutive terms in office and was a pivotal force in Alabama's change into a two-party State. While in office, Congressman Dickinson accomplished a great deal for his district, the State of Alabama, and our Nation.

He worked tirelessly for the 13 counties in his congressional district, particularly on military matters. As ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, Bill was able to protect and strengthen the military bases in Alabama. He was a steamroller in military funding issues for the Air War College at Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, and Gunter Annex in Montgomery, AL, and also further south in Alabama at Fort Rucker, where Army helicopter pilots go through their training. His exemplary work in this area improved both the economy of our State and the security of our Nation.

Bill's work for the military also extended to the national level. He was very influential in the rearming of America during the Cold War, working to stop the spread of communism and providing the military with the programs and equipment they needed during the Vietnam war. Bill is credited both with the creation of the Aviation Department in the Department of the Army and for the Apache Attack Helicopter program. In fact, Bill was nicknamed the ''Father of Army Aviation'' due to his advocacy on behalf of those issues.

His work garnered the attention of the American Conservative Union, which presented him with the Statesman Award; the Army Aviation Association of America, which awarded him with its Congressional Appreciation Award; and the Association of the United States Army, which presented William with the Distinguished Service to Soldiers award, among others.

Bill is loved and will be missed by his wife Barbara, his four children and his five grandchildren. He was an inspiration to many and will be remembered for his service to our Nation. I ask the entire Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the life of our colleague, Congressman William Dickinson.