

## Congressional Closeup by Carl Osgood

### Logjam Broken on JOBS Bill

The two parties in the Senate finally reached agreement on moving forward with the bill to make changes in the corporate tax structure to satisfy complaints lodged with the World Trade Organization. The bill, which is advertised by supporters on both sides as especially helpful for small and medium-sized manufacturers, was held up when the GOP twice filed cloture on the bill, in order to avoid a vote on an amendment, sponsored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Ia.), to overturn the Bush Administration's new rules on overtime pay.

Under the agreement, the bill was to be taken up after the Senate returns from its Easter recess on April 19, and each side will be limited in the amendments it can offer, the Republicans to 50 and the Democrats to 30, including the Harkin amendment.

The bill repeals a corporate tax break which was ruled an illegal subsidy by the WTO; and in return, gives manufacturers a break on their income taxes. Each side blamed the other for the logjam that resulted from the two failed cloture votes, and the heated rhetoric on the bill continued almost right up to the point that Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) announced the agreement.

### Durbin, Craig Would Tinker with Patriot Act

The so-called Patriot Act, passed in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, continues to generate opposition around the country. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), who, along with Sen. Larry Craig (R-Id.), is sponsoring legislation to place limits on some of its provisions, reported, during a Senate floor speech on April 7, that 275 communities in 39 states have passed reso-

lutions expressing concern about the Patriot Act. "Many Americans," Durbin said, "are concerned that the Patriot Act is restricting their freedoms unnecessarily."

The Durbin-Craig bill, which the two Senators introduced in January, would place limits on roving John Doe wiretaps, so-called sneak-and-peek search warrants, and the FBI's authority to compel library and personal records. The bill would not make any other changes to the Act, nor repeal any of its provisions. Yet, the Department of Justice issued a veto threat against the bill upon its introduction, before any hearings have even been held. In a letter to Durbin and Craig, the DoJ complained that the bill would "eliminate" some Patriot Act tools, and "make it more difficult" to fight terrorism than before the act was passed. Craig, who followed Durbin to the floor, assured the Senate that their bill was drafted "to clarify and amend in a minor way the Patriot Act's most troubling provisions so that the whole or even piecemeal repeal of the law would be unnecessary," and to "safeguard the liberties of law-abiding citizens while preserving the law enforcement authorities essential to a successful war on terror."

The Bush Administration, as recently as National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's April 8 testimony to the 9/11 Commission, apparently sees even such minor changes in reauthorizing the Act, as those proposed by Durbin and Craig, to be a threat.

### Hagel, Lieberman Introduce Middle East Initiative

On April 8, Senators Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) introduced a bill to provide \$5 billion over five years "for economic and political development," as Hagel

put it, in the Middle East and Central Asia. The bill creates three new multi-lateral mechanisms to distribute this funding: a new development bank to promote private sector development; a development foundation to implement assistance programs; and a "public-private sector trust for democracy" to promote development of civil society and democracy. Hagel said "It is absolutely critical if we are to not only successfully engage, but win, over the great threats and challenges of our time, with a multi-faceted approach to these issues."

Lieberman argued that while use of force is necessary for defeating aggression, "ultimately, we are not going to win the war on terrorism unless we also use plowshares," which is what the new legislation is supposed to provide. He described the bill as creating a new generation of institutions to do what the Marshall Plan did for Europe in the late 1940's: "Not only to bring opportunity and freedom to the people of Europe, who suffered so during the Second World War, but to help in rebuilding and democratization as a response to the growth of communism."

Both Senators acknowledged the image problem America has in the Arab world, especially in the aftermath of the leaking of President Bush's Greater Middle East Initiative. "This is a participatory effort," Hagel said. "This is reaching out to the people of this area. . . . We are not attempting to impose a program or impose a government on anyone. That will never work. That has never worked in history. . . . The people of that area want to see more, and we know that we must overcome a number of these questions about our motives and our purpose." They plan to meet with all the ambassadors of the 33 countries covered by the bill, as well as representatives of other institutions, and the Bush Administration, in order to generate support.