

32 YEARS OF DEDICATED SENATE SERVICE

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the service of Carolyn Iddings, my Sergeant at Arms customer support analyst. On June 4, 2005, Carolyn celebrated 32 years of service in the Senate.

Carolyn began her Senate career in the office of Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon. For 16 years, she helped develop many of the systems the Senate uses today including office computers and correspondence management systems. Carolyn then joined the Sergeant at Arms office and has continued to assist in the development and deployment of many Senate information management systems.

Shortly after my election to the Senate, Carolyn was assigned to guide my staff through the complex process of opening a Senate office. Her experience and knowledge of the inner workings of a Member's office were indispensable as she assisted my staff in the opening days of the 106th Congress. She took my systems administrator under her wing and helped him equip in a timely and efficient manner. Thanks to her efforts, my office was up and running the day I was sworn in as a U.S. Senator. Her knowledge of the challenging bureaucratic landscape of the Senate played a key role in the smooth setup of my offices. On numerous occasions Carolyn's help has proven invaluable as our office automation systems have evolved.

Over the last 7 years, Carolyn has answered hundreds of questions, briefed my staff on countless security, information technology, and emergency planning matters. She has shown consistent patience, kindness, and expertise in her interactions with me and my staff, always willing to lend a helping hand. Carolyn demonstrates outstanding professionalism in her job and I wish her the best.

VETERANS AND TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the contribution of our Armed Forces to this great Nation. It is important to reflect on the sacrifice and commitment of the brave men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend what our Nation stands for—freedom, equality, and justice for all Americans.

Without our veterans, we would not be the free Nation that we are today.

The marines, airmen, and soldiers of Montana have always risen to the challenge by fighting overseas and protecting our homeland.

Over the past 2 weeks 700 members of the first of the 163rd infantry battalion of Montana's National Guard returned home after an 18 month deployment in Iraq and 250 troops from the first of the 189th aviation battalion will return home before the holidays.

I am extremely proud of these men and women, but I also have great concern for them.

Montana now has the highest percentage of veterans per capita in its population than any other state. We also have the highest percentage of female veterans in the country, per capita.

According to the most recent census, the veteran population in Montana is 108,476 out of an adult civilian population of 668,651. Simply put, veterans, and families of veterans, constitute a significant portion of the population in Montana.

They are our mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, sisters, brothers, and friends who are making sacrifices. I take our Nation's commitment to our veterans seriously.

Many Montanans choose to serve because of the economic situation in rural America.

There is no question that rural States are carrying a huge burden when it comes to our current conflicts abroad and these veterans deserve proper healthcare.

I am proud to say that this year the VA Hospital at Fort Harrison, Helena, MT and its outpatient clinics have been ranked as the best VA medical system in the country; however, the shortfalls that we faced in veterans healthcare funding nationwide in 2005 and 2006 are discouraging.

We still need to ensure that those who have given so much for our country are granted their due benefits, and treated with respect. Let's think big when it comes to providing for our veterans and health care.

We must fully fund the veterans' health care system and we should make spending mandatory in order to ensure that those who have given so much to our country are granted their due benefits and are treated with respect and thanks.

Let's think big when it comes to providing for our veterans and health care. We must fully fund the Veterans health care system and we should make spending mandatory in order to ensure that those who have given so much to our country are granted the benefits they deserve.

Since September 11, 2001, about 80 percent of Montana's National Guard members have been deployed to the Middle East, some of them more than once. This Monday in Great Falls, MT, members of our 341st space wing and Red Horse Squadrons from Malmstrom Air Force Base and the Air National Guard will deploy to Iraq.

When they return, they should not have to worry about getting health care and benefits.

As we welcome home our new veterans and deploy troops overseas, let us remember those who have served honorably in all wars, and pay particular attention to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have taken the lives of the following brave Montanans: SPC Travis Arndt, Great Falls; CPT Michael MacKinnon, Helena; PFC Andrew

Bedard, Missoula; LCpl Nicholas Bloem, Bozeman; SFC Robbie McNary, Lewistown; CPL Raleigh Smith, Troy; LCpl Nathan Wood, Great Falls; SSG Aaron Honeyman, Glasgow; LCpl Kane Funke, Kalispell; CPL Dean Pratt, Stevensville; PFC Owen D. Witt, Sand Springs; 1LT Edward Saltz, Big Fork; PFC Kristofer Stoneisfer, Missoula; 1LT Josh Hyland, Missoula.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, drought continues to be a serious problem for many states in this country, and I am very pleased that yesterday, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, we passed legislation that will help small businesses in those States that have been hurt by drought. I thank Senators LEVIN and WARNER, and their staffs, for their help in moving drought relief one step closer to enactment.

This legislation helps small businesses that need disaster assistance but can not get it through the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program. You see, the SBA does not treat all drought victims the same. The agency only helps those small businesses whose income is tied to farming and agriculture. However, farmers and ranchers are not the only small business owners whose livelihoods are at risk when drought hits their communities. The impact can be just as devastating to the owners of rafting businesses, marinas, and bait and tackle shops. Just ask the many small businesses on Lake Mead, outside of Las Vegas, that met with the committee in July: fishing guides that struggle to find ramps that still reach the water to launch their boats; boat dealerships in the county that have lost an estimated \$100 million in sales because recreation at the lake is down; marinas paying millions to move their docks, buildings, and utilities, trying to "chase the water." The area usually gets 8 to 10 million visitors a year. However, the impact of drought on Lake Mead has had a serious adverse impact on the regional economy, exceeding \$1 billion according to local officials. Lake Michigan has suffered similar economic losses, and its delegation has been pushing for small business relief for years. Sadly, these small businesses cannot get help through the SBA's disaster loan program because of something taxpayers hate about Government—bureaucracy.

The SBA denies these businesses access to disaster loans because its lawyers say drought is not a sudden event and therefore it is not a disaster by definition. However, contrary to the agency's position that drought is not a disaster, in July of 2002, when this legislation was originally introduced, the SBA had in effect drought disaster declarations in 36 States. As of today, 17 States are under SBA drought disaster declarations: Wisconsin, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Montana, Oregon,

Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Oklahoma, Illinois, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Kansas, and California. Adding insult to injury, in those States where the agency declares drought disasters, it limits assistance to only farm-related small businesses. Take, for instance, South Carolina. A couple of years ago that entire State had been declared a disaster by the SBA, but the administration would not help all drought victims. Let me read to you from the declaration:

Small businesses located in all 46 counties may apply for economic injury disaster loan assistance through the SBA. These are working capital loans to help the business continue to meet its obligations until the business returns to normal conditions. . . . Only small, non-farm agriculture dependent and small agricultural cooperatives are eligible to apply for assistance. Nurseries are also eligible for economic injury caused by drought conditions.

The SBA has the authority to help all small businesses hurt by drought in declared disaster areas, but the agency won't do it. For years the agency has been applying the law unfairly, helping some and not others, and it is out of compliance with the law. The small business drought relief provision that passed yesterday as part of the Defense Authorization Act—and that I introduced this July as the Small Business Drought Relief Act of 2005 S. 1463—would force SBA to comply with existing law, restoring fairness to an unfair system, and get help to small business drought victims that need it.

This legislation has been thoroughly reviewed, passing the committee of jurisdiction and the full Senate three times, with supporters numbering up to 25, from both sides of the aisle. In addition to approval by the committee of jurisdiction, OMB, the Office of Management and Budget, approved virtually identical legislation in 2003. The legislation passed yesterday includes those changes we worked out with the administration, and I see no reason why this should not be retained in the final conference report and sent to the President for his signature.

I thank Senators SNOWE and BOND, our current and past chairs, both of whom have been supportive of this legislation each time it was introduced and passed. And I again thank Senators LEVIN and WARNER.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On September 3, 2003 in Bridgeport, CT, George Hamilton hosted an after-

noon picnic at his home. During the picnic, Hamilton and another guest discovered that one of the other men at the event was gay. They attacked and beat the gay man, causing injuries to his face and ribs. According to sources, throughout the attack the men shouted anti-gay slurs.

I believe that our Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, in all circumstances, from threats to them at home. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a major step forward in achieving that goal. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to speak briefly on some of the votes that this body held yesterday related to the fiscal year 2006 Department of Defense authorization bill. Overall, this year's Defense authorization bill was a step in the right direction—for supporting our troops, for strengthening our military, and for securing our country. While I regret the limited time that we had to debate amendments, the end result here is, on balance, positive.

There are, however, a couple of important votes on amendments that I would like to take this opportunity to discuss. First, the two amendments on Iraq—one offered by Senator LEVIN, which I cosponsored, and the other a Republican alternative offered by Senator WARNER, which I voted for.

These two amendments were very similar, and they were both steps in the right direction. They both express the Senate's belief that U.S. forces should not remain in Iraq indefinitely. They both establish expectations that calendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty, thereby creating the conditions for the phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq. They both stress the need for compromise among Iraqis to achieve a sustainable sovereign government. And they both require the President to begin sharing with the American people his campaign plan for success in Iraq.

But these two amendments, despite all of their similarities, have a fundamental difference. The Democratic amendment would have gone one important step further than the Republican amendment that we ended up adopting. It would have required the President to tell the American people not only his campaign plan, but estimated dates for the redeployment of U.S. forces—in other words, a timetable and strategy for success in Iraq. The Levin amendment acknowledged that unexpected contingencies might arise, and that such contingencies might change some of the projected redeployment dates, but I still believe that without these projected dates, we have left ourselves in an open-ended

commitment. That is not good for us, it is not good for Iraq, and it is not good for stability in the region.

Ultimately, I supported the Warner amendment because, as I have said, it is a step in the right direction. But it frankly doesn't take us any closer to convincing the American people that the President has a plan or a timetable for bringing our operations in Iraq to a successful conclusion. And I believe that our soldiers and the American public deserve better.

I would also like to briefly address three related amendments offered by Senators GRAHAM, BINGAMAN, and one by both Senators GRAHAM and LEVIN, dealing with the issue of habeas corpus and detainees who are in U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

I voted against Senator GRAHAM's underlying amendment on this issue because I believe that it would have been a step in the wrong direction for our country. That is not to say that we should be providing sanctuary to terrorists. We shouldn't. Any coward who is complicit in terrorist attacks against the U.S. and the civilized world must be brought to justice.

I also recognize that the new threat posed by international terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida, and their murderous henchmen, requires law-abiding nations to adapt in how they combat this threat.

But as we adapt to the terrorist threat, we have to make sure that we don't hurt ourselves, and the cause of freedom, in the process. America's judicial system is part of the bedrock of our country. Protecting its integrity should be a cause of highest concern. That is why I voted for Senator BINGAMAN's second-degree amendment to strike the Graham amendment's text that would have stripped U.S. courts of the ability to review writs of habeas corpus submitted by or on behalf of foreign detainees at Guantanamo Bay. I regret that Senator BINGAMAN's amendment failed on a party line vote.

I commend, however, Senator LEVIN for working with Senator GRAHAM to strike a compromise on this issue. The Graham-Levin compromise is not perfect. It certainly doesn't go as far as this Senator would have liked in fixing the underlying text. But faced with the prospect of the original Graham amendment being sent to conference in its original form, I chose to support the Graham-Levin compromise, which is a definite improvement over the underlying text. What is particularly heartening is that Senator GRAHAM, upon reflection, realized that his amendment went too far and accepted the moderating suggestions proposed by Senator LEVIN. My hope is that the conferees on this bill will continue to improve upon the Graham-Levin text.

Mr. President, as I said at the outset, the Defense authorization bill that the Senate passed yesterday is not perfect. But on balance, I believe that it sends a message to our troops that we are here to support them, and that we remain committed to providing them