

The Congress also included major new goals with respect to a robust renewable fuel standard of 36 billion gallons a year. All of those provisions were recommendations of the SAFE Coalition and recommendations in the legislation that I introduced in the Congress.

The recommendations on additional production of energy was advanced with the recent passage legislation to open a portion of the Gulf of Mexico, known as Lease 181, to additional production of oil and natural gas.

There is still more to be done to reduce our oil intensity and to allow us to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil. But I was proud to have been a member of the Energy Committee in the Senate that has advanced an energy bill with real and constructive solutions that will improve America's energy future.

And I was also pleased to work with Fred Smith, P.X. Kelley, and many other American leaders who wanted to do the right thing for this country and whose efforts as a part of the SAFE Coalition, I believe, had measurable and substantial impact on the progress that we made this year.

In a climate of so much partisanship, and at a time when it is so difficult to get things done, I am proud that all of us, working together, did something that represents a real investment in America's future.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

HONORING SARGENT SHRIVER

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to Sargent Shriver, a humanitarian and powerful advocate for the poor and most vulnerable among us.

While serving under President John F. Kennedy, Sargent Shriver was the driving force behind the creation of the Peace Corps and is credited with turning a bold idea for public service into a reality. Each year, more than 8,000 of our best and brightest citizens travel around the world, representing our Nation and values, to work with governments, nonprofits, schools, and local citizens to fulfill three goals: providing aid to those in need, promoting a better understanding of America, and fostering greater understanding between people of different nations.

Today, Peace Corps volunteers join with people across the globe in helping to lift up families and communities: farming and agricultural development in Paraguay; promoting education in China; combating HIV/AIDS in Ghana; and so much else. More than 190,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in nearly 140 countries. The work Peace Corps volunteers are carrying out on behalf of our country has never been more important than it is today. There is an urgent need to repair the damage to America's image abroad, both among our friends and those who do not wish America well.

And the Peace Corps is only one part of Sargent Shriver's important contributions to our country.

Sargent Shriver served as the first Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity under President Lyndon Johnson. He helped lead President Johnson's war on poverty where he created or inspired the creation of many social programs, including Volunteers in Service to America, VISTA, Head Start, Foster Grandparents, Job Corps, Upward Bound, and the Legal Services Corporation. I was honored and proud to serve on the board of Legal Services Corporation from 1978 to 1981, chairing the board of directors from 1978 to 1980. The Legal Services Corporation, and many efforts mentioned, continue to help millions of low-income Americans today.

He played a significant role in the drafting and passage of the National Community Service Trust Act of 1993, legislation that created AmeriCorps, and I was proud to work with him on this effort in the Clinton administration. In recognition of his service to this Nation, on August 8, 1994, President Bill Clinton presented Sargent Shriver with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our country's highest civilian honor.

I continue to be inspired by Sargent Shriver's service to our country. In fact, nearly a decade ago, I joined Sargent Shriver at the dedication of the new Peace Corps building and recounted a story I once heard. When the founders of Peace Corps were just starting out—still figuring out what the organization would look like and how it would work—Sargent Shriver was shown an organizational chart. This chart showed him at the top, with lines pointing down at staff members at various levels of a hierarchy. At the bottom of the chart was the word "volunteer." When Sargent Shriver saw this chart, he turned it upside down because he believed deeply that the volunteers were the heart and soul—and the most important part—of the Peace Corps. His vision set the course of the agency—and that is how it has been run ever since.

Each of us has a responsibility to live up to that vision, to promote volunteerism, to give our young people a chance to give back to the Nation that has given each of us so much. That is why I stood with my colleagues in 2003 to undo massive funding cuts to AmeriCorps. These are cuts that would have meant thousands of Americans who wanted to serve through programs like VISTA, City Year, and Teach For America but would be turned away at the doors.

And that is why I have worked to support AmeriCorps and to remove barriers to public service. I proposed the Public Service Academy Act. It would create a new Public Service Academy, modeled on the military service academies, to provide a 4-year, affordable college education for more than 5,000 students each year in exchange for 5-year commitment to public service.

Sargent Shriver is a leader and servant whose legacy will live on for generations to come. It will live on in the work of Peace Corps volunteers in nations around the world. It will live on in the work of AmeriCorps helping to lift up communities here at home. And it will live on in his work to create more opportunities for children and families living in poverty.

Together, we can help to carry his legacy forward, too, through public service—and through small and large acts of kindness and generosity to build better communities and a better world.●

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

IRAQ'S RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I wrote to Secretary Rice on September 11, 2007, out of concern for Iraq's Christian and other non-Muslim religious minorities who appear to be targeted by Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish militants. The severe violations of religious freedom faced by members of these indigenous communities, and their potential extinction from their ancient homeland, is deeply alarming in light of our mission to bring freedom to the Iraqi people.

In addition, such violence may be an indicator of greater sectarian violence. Such rising violence and the Iraqi internally displaced people and refugee crises potentially could serve as catalysts for wider regional instability. These crises demand an urgent response from our Government.

On January 11, 2008, I received a response from the Department of State to the questions I posed in my letter. I ask to have my original letter and the response from the Department of State printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.●

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, September 11, 2007.
HON. CONDOLEEZZA RICE,
Secretary, Department of State,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY RICE: I am writing out of concern for Iraq's Christian and other non-Muslim religious minorities, including Catholic Chaldeans, Syriac Orthodox, Assyrian, Armenian and Protestant Christians, as well as smaller Yazidi and Sabean Mandaean communities. I know that the fate of these communities was the subject of a recent letter to you from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

These communities appear to be targeted by Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish militants. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reports that Christians, now less than 4 percent of Iraq's population, make up 40 percent of its refugees. And according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "violence against members of Iraq's Christian community occurs throughout the country, and the Commission has raised particular concern about reports from Baghdad, Mosul, Basra, and the north Kurdish regions."

Such violence bespeaks a humanitarian crisis of grave proportions. The severe violations of religious freedom faced by members