

protection for children and their families. But because the Federal Government failed to meet the demand for certified contractors, the Federal Government was already delaying the implementation of the rule.

I was proud that the Senate intervened to send a clear message to EPA. The Senate passed the Collins-Inhofe amendment, S. 4253, to the supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 4899, by a vote of 60 to 37.

This amendment prevented supplemental funds from being used to implement the rule. The vote showed overwhelming bipartisan concern about EPA's disastrous implementation of the lead-based paint rule.

Fortunately, EPA got the message. On June 18, 2010, EPA's enforcement office issued a memorandum extending the lead rule deadline for renovators to enroll in training classes to September 30, 2010. Furthermore, it has extended the deadline for contractors to complete training to December 31, 2010, and most importantly, the agency agreed to work to provide additional trainers in areas of need.

EPA's concerns about extending additional time for renovators to become certified never materialized; in fact, instead of people continuing to delay signing up for classes, people flocked to them. EPA's most recent training numbers show that as of September 23, 2010, EPA has accredited 364 training providers who have conducted more than 21,400 courses, training an estimated 476,700 people in the construction and remodeling industries to use lead-safe work practices.

From just 160,000 people in April, to 476,700 people in September, more time has meant greater ability to take classes and come into compliance.

The delay has allowed another 160 training providers to be certified; an additional 14,500 courses to be held; and 316,700 people to receive training in lead safe work practices.

Unfortunately, we did not have one oversight hearing on this rule. There were numerous opportunities prior to the rule going final, but they were never taken. Nonetheless, I am pleased to have worked with Senators COLLINS, ALEXANDER, VITTER, COBURN and others to highlight this important issue and provide additional time for renovators to attend training classes.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SAFETY ACT IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2010

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the House of Representatives passed the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act Improvements Act of 2010, which passed the Senate unanimously in May. I applaud the leadership of the House for taking up this legislation, which is of great importance to the law enforcement community. Today's action brings to a successful conclusion the good work of Senators and Representatives who have helped move this legis-

lation through both Chambers and builds upon the bipartisan Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act that was enacted in 2004.

I want to recognize the longstanding efforts and strong support of the Fraternal Order of Police, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and the National Association of Police Organizations, along with many others in the broader law enforcement community. Their support and assistance contributed greatly to today's success. I also thank the Judiciary Committee's ranking member Senator SESSIONS, Senator KYL, and Senator CONRAD for their cosponsorship.

This legislation will assist qualified Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers in exercising their privileges related to the interstate concealed carry of firearms under existing law more easily and efficiently. The legislation will give active-duty officers and qualified retired officers more flexibility in obtaining the necessary credentials in several important ways and will overcome some of the challenges that retired officers have faced in the past in obtaining certification. The legislation will also remove some of the administrative pressure on law enforcement agencies by allowing the required firearms qualification testing of retired officers to be done by a private firearms instructor who is certified to test active-duty officers in his or her jurisdiction and at the officer's own expense. And it will give law enforcement agencies more certainty and authority when determining whether a retired officer suffers from mental health issues sufficient to disqualify that officer from certification under the law.

I have great confidence in the men and women in law enforcement who put their own lives on the line to serve their fellow citizens every day. This confidence extends to these men and women whether they are on the job or off duty. I trust in them and their proven ability to exercise the firearm privileges provided under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act responsibly and with the same solemnity with which they approach their official duties.

I have said many times that Congress's efforts to assist State and local law enforcement are a crucial part of our Federal policy and a policy that pays dividends in our overall capability to protect the citizens of the United States. State and local law enforcement officers are the first line of defense and support in America's communities, and for that they deserve the recognition and continued support of Congress. We must also recognize the men and women who serve as law enforcement officers throughout the Federal Government, for whom this legislation will also provide benefits. Federal officers play an indispensable role in the Federal system and in important partnerships with State and local officials around the country. I am glad

that the improvements we have worked for over the last several years will finally be enacted, and I look forward to hearing about the positive changes that will come.

PERSECUTION OF THE BAHAI'S

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to call the Senate's attention to members of the Baha'i faith who have and continue to suffer severe persecution by the Iranian Government.

Senators should be aware that seven prominent Iranian Baha'i leaders are currently in prison, facing sentences of up to 10 years, charged with espionage, establishing an illegal administration, and promoting propaganda against the Islamic order. These spurious charges are only the latest example of the mistreatment of the largest religious minority in Iran.

Ironically, the Baha'i faith originated in Iran during the 19th century, separating the Baha'is from their previous affiliation with Islam. The founder of the faith, known as The Bb, was then arrested, locked in a dungeon, and executed, as were some 20,000 of his followers. These atrocities devastated a religion whose tenets include global unity, peace and diversity.

Persecution of the Baha'is in Iran continued into the next century, with the Iranian Government's destruction of Baha'i literature in 1933, and in 1955 the demolition of the Baha'i national headquarters. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the government has stepped up its active discrimination against the Baha'is. Children are prohibited or discouraged from receiving higher education, Baha'is are unable to practice their faith in public, they are prevented from opening businesses or advancing their careers, and Baha'i cemeteries are destroyed. Baha'is are slandered by the Iranian media, often called worshippers of Satan.

The arrests of the seven Baha'i leaders are the latest official Iranian abuse against members of this religious faith. These men and women led the "Friends in Iran," a Baha'i group working to meet the needs of the Baha'is in Iran. After their arrest, the group disbanded, reducing the much needed support to the Baha'is. The leaders were incarcerated in 2008, and were not brought before a judge for over 20 months.

The systematic abuses of the Baha'i by the Iranian Government are clear violations of provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory, on economic and educational opportunities, religious freedom, and due process. They are also violations of Iran's own laws.

Prominent global leaders are speaking out in support of the Baha'is in Iran, including Secretary of State Clinton, her British counterpart William Hague, and the President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek. They

have each expressed concern and disapproval with Iran's mistreatment of Baha'is. They are joined by a long list of human rights groups, such as the International Federation for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch and the Iranian League for the Defense of Human Rights. I want to add my voice in condemning Iran's persecution of its Baha'i religious minority.

Our Nation stands for fundamental rights and freedoms. We are not perfect, and I have not hesitated to speak out when I felt short of our own values and principles. But I also believe we have an obligation to speak out when the fundamental rights of citizens of other nations are being denied. The Baha'is of Iran deserve our admiration and support.

ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, at a time when many Americans are increasingly concerned with the situation in Afghanistan, I was interested in an investigative report on U.S. aid for Afghanistan in the August 2, 2010, issue of the *Christian Science Monitor* weekly magazine. The report describes several aspects of the U.S. Agency for International Development's approach to development in that country, and I want to take a minute to clarify what may be a misconception about the Congress's expectations.

The article describes USAID's focus on the "burn rate"—that is, how quickly aid funds are spent. With this as USAID's focus, the more money the President asks for, the more money Congress appropriates, the more money USAID has available to spend, and the faster USAID says it needs to spend it in order to satisfy Congress.

The article gives examples of the mistakes and problems that have resulted from trying to spend too much, too fast, in an environment where security threats severely limit the ability of USAID to monitor the funds, where a large percentage of the population lives as though it were the 12th century, where corruption is pervasive, and where the Karzai Government is widely perceived as ineffective or worse. The article describes big-dollar contracts with foreign companies that are not familiar with Afghanistan, for projects that are hastily designed from the top down, are overly ambitious, and too often do not produce good results.

This is one Senator who is not impressed by burn rates. I don't think they are a good measure of anything, except possibly waste. When I hear that the administration expects to increase the burn rate for USAID programs and activities in Afghanistan from \$250 million per month to \$300 million per month, it rings alarm bells. I am interested in projects that are worth the investment and that provide lasting improvements in the lives of the Afghan people. More often, that means spending less, and spending it more slowly and more carefully.

What we are seeing in Afghanistan is reminiscent of Iraq, although in Iraq the waste and shoddy results were on a far larger scale. The Pentagon was asked to be a relief and reconstruction agency that it was never meant to be. The empty buildings, electricity blackouts and unfinished projects are part of the costly legacy of that debacle.

But the increasing tendency in Afghanistan to measure progress by the rate at which money is spent is unwise. We have urged USAID to go slower, to focus on smaller, manageable, sustainable projects that are chosen with input from local communities. Local people, and local governments or national government ministries with a record of transparency, accountability and good performance, should be involved at all stages, from design to implementation to oversight. It may take longer, the projects may not be as grandiose, but the long term results are likely to be better.

In response, we are told USAID needs more money to support the civilian surge and implement bigger projects quickly as part of the "clear, hold, build" strategy. I understand the pressure USAID is under, from the Pentagon, the White House, and the State Department, to spend more money faster. I suspect if it were up to USAID alone it would spend less and get better results. And I am concerned that at the same time USAID is being told to spend more, it is treated as a second-class agency that sometimes has to fight just to be included in the discussions about the very strategy it is told to implement.

But I have seen, as the *Christian Science Monitor* describes, the disappointing results of the big-spending, rushed approach. Costly new roads that are already deteriorating, poorly built irrigation canals that have collapsed from landslides, hydro-electric projects that don't produce electricity. United States officials in Kabul who have been in the country only a few months and will be gone after a year, trying to direct what happens on the ground hundreds of miles away. Perhaps the worst of it is that many Afghans have become angry and distrustful of the United States because they know these projects were expensive and mismanaged, and promises were not kept. Just as bad is when USAID contractors issue self-serving reports—describing projects which cost too much and produced too little—as success stories.

Of course, spending billions of dollars does produce successes. Hundreds of thousands of Afghan girls are in school thanks to the United States. That alone is a major achievement. Agricultural productivity is increasing, thanks to USAID programs, although opium poppy cultivation is also flourishing. Another success is the money we provide to the National Solidarity Program, which works from the bottom up, with better oversight and less waste than the big contracts. It is supporting economic development

projects, often costing only a few tens of thousands of dollars, in thousands of Afghan towns and villages.

But these successes should not obscure the fact that planning, implementation, and oversight of programs need to be better, both for American taxpayers and for the Afghan people.

At a time when we face large budget deficits and money is scarce, I doubt the wisdom of spending billions of dollars this way. That is one reason the Department of State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee has recommended \$1.3 billion less than the President requested for aid for Afghanistan for fiscal year 2011. Some argue that we should have cut even more.

We want to help the people of Afghanistan. They have suffered, and continue to suffer, every imaginable hardship. Combating poverty, empowering women whose political participation is essential to the future of that country, building more effective public institutions, and strengthening the rule of law in Afghanistan are in the long term interests of the United States. We know that in a country torn by conflict and where corruption is rampant, some projects will fail no matter how well designed they are. We understand that there is an unavoidable element of risk. But spending money fast is not the same as taking risks to help people.

I urge the administration to review its current assumptions, look critically at the results so far, take the time to understand the lessons learned, and re-evaluate the amount of aid that Afghanistan can effectively absorb so progress is measured not by the rate at which money is spent, but by tangible improvements in the lives of the Afghan people.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF BONE BUILDERS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, next month, RSVP programs in Vermont's Rutland and Addison Counties will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of Bone Builders, a free exercise program that helps Vermonters combat and prevent osteoporosis. I congratulate all the participants and volunteers who have contributed to the success of Bone Builders and for reaching this milestone.

As we mark the 6-month milestone of the Affordable Health Care Act and the implementation of more and more of its benefits for Americans and their families, we all are increasingly attuned to the advantages of ending the corrosive health cost spiral, and the roles to be played by individual and organized preventive efforts like Bone Builders.

Bone Builders uses RSVP volunteers to lead weight training and balance exercise classes aimed at preventing fractures caused by osteoporosis. Classes help participants increase their muscular strength, balance, and overall bone density. Countless studies have