

for the Assistant Secretaries (Financial Management and Comptroller) in the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. By downgrading these financial management positions, we believe that S. 679 will erode civilian control of the military with regard to resources. Each of the military departments manages huge amounts of federal dollars, ranging from \$166 billion to \$216 billion in FY 2012. These sums far exceed the funding for any non-defense federal agency. In the military services, these dollars are managed by the most senior military officers, and the Service Secretaries need to have a Senate-confirmed political appointee to provide appropriate civilian control. This legislation would be a significant step back from the landmark Goldwater-Nichols legislation, which sought to increase civilian control of the military.

We also believe that downgrading these three Assistant Secretary positions is inappropriate in view of the focus being placed on improving financial management and achieving auditable financial statements. Congress has established a deadline for achieving auditable financials in each military department and has indicated a strong desire to have the departments comply. The three departmental Assistant Secretaries have the lead responsibility for this challenging task. Downgrading the positions may well slow down efforts to achieve auditable financial statements, an outcome that seems to contradict Congressional priorities.

Overall, the Assistant Secretaries have substantial policy making authority over key aspects of defense financial management. For all these reasons, we believe that the three Assistant Secretaries should remain as Senate-confirmed political appointees.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, June 23, the Senate resume consideration of S. 679; that the Vitter amendment No. 499 regarding czars and the DeMint amendment No. 510 regarding Bureau of Justice Statistics be debated concurrently; that there be up to 30 minutes of debate with Senators VITTER, DEMINT, REID or designee and MCCONNELL or designee, each controlling 7½ minutes; that upon the use or yielding back of time the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Vitter amendment and the DeMint amendment in that order; that there be no amendments, motions, or points of order in order to either amendment prior to the votes other than budget points of order on each and the applicable motions to waive; further, that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; finally, that provisions of the previous order regarding amendments remain in effect.

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST MICHAEL B. COOK

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life of SPC Michael B. Cook, who died on June 6, 2011, from injuries sustained from indirect rocket fire in Baghdad, Iraq, while supporting Operation New Dawn. He gave his life in service to his country on his 27th birthday. Michael was assigned to the B Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, based at Fort Riley, KS.

Growing up in the towns of Pelham and Salem, NH, Michael graduated from Salem High School in 2003. He enlisted as a way to pay for his education and serve his country. Like so many brave sons and daughters of New Hampshire, Michael sought to serve his country and did so with honor. Tragically, Michael is the fifth Salem High School graduate killed in action in the war on terror, and the third from his class.

Michael is remembered by his family as a devoted father and son. Friends described him as hardworking and dedicated to the service of others. It was therefore no surprise when he answered the call to serve his country and protect his fellow Americans.

While no words can diminish the loss of this brave New Hampshire son, I hope his family can find comfort in knowing that all Americans appreciate and respect his heroic service and sacrifice.

Michael is survived by his wife Samantha and their two children, Hailee and Michael at Fort Riley, KS, and his parents Patti and Michael B. Cook Sr., and his siblings Lucas and Kimberly of Salem, NH. He also leaves behind a caring extended family and many dear friends. He will be missed by all.

I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the life, service, and sacrifice of SPC Michael B. Cook.

### JUNE 22, 2009, METRORAIL TRAGEDY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 2 years ago today the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority experienced the most tragic metrorail accident the Greater Washington region has ever seen. With time, the wounds of this tragedy's survivors continue to heal, but the loss and pain will never be forgotten. My heart goes out to the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the tragic collision of two Metro trains on the Red Line at the Fort Totten metrorail station. My deepest sympathies remain with their families and friends whose lives will forever be affected having lost someone dear to them in this tragedy.

Last summer, the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB, and the

Federal Transit Administration, FTA, concluded their investigations into the crash. The investigations revealed many troubling findings with the operation, maintenance, and management of the metrorail system, not the least of which is that the June 22, 2009, crash was entirely preventable and resulted from systemic failures to address ongoing track signal problems and a work culture that ignored safety.

For several years WMATA failed to respond to or take adequate operational safety measures in response to repeated signal failures along the section of track where the accident occurred. During WMATA's efforts to fix the problem, Metro refused to heed warnings from the signal manufacturers about using third-party components to repair failed track signal equipment and in doing so prolonged and exacerbated the signal relay problems on the track.

These findings coupled with an extensive Federal Transit Administration safety audit that revealed several shocking systemwide safety lapses, which include systemic failures to notify train operators about the presence of track maintenance workers on the right-of-way in tunnels throughout the system, helped shed light on the inexcusable and tragic series of accidents that have taken 12 lives and injured more than 80 people in the last year.

I am pleased to say that under new leadership in the general manager and CEO position as well as the placement of several new members of the board of directors that Metro is working hard to resolve the safety issues that were becoming commonplace in the headlines of area newspapers. Metro's new comprehensive safety plan outlines a number of procedures that are being put in place to improve worker training and safety preparedness and a zero tolerance policy for texting and cell phone use by vehicle operators. According to the general manager, every Metro employee, including himself, has gone through the safety training program. Management is clearly making an effort to establish a culture of safety that has been absent at Metro for many years. These are important steps in the right direction but developing safety measures for employees to follow is just one piece of making Metro safer for years to come.

There are, however, encouraging and lasting developments at Metro to improve safety. A year ago, the Metro board of directors announced that it was placing an order for 428 new 7000 Series railcars. These new safer railcars are in the prototype development phase and when the order is fulfilled, all of the remaining 1000 series that have been in use since the system opened in 1976 will finally be replaced. The 1000 series cars have always presented a safety hazard and it is the 1000 series cars that buckled and sheared apart on June 22, 2009, compounding the seriousness and costliness of the Red Line crash. Retiring and replacing