

STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW V. THOMPSON

SSG Matthew V. Thompson, 28, of Irvine, CA, died August 23, 2016, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, of injuries caused by an improvised explosive device that detonated near his patrol while conducting dismounted operations. Staff Sergeant Thompson was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA.

PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS CHARLES H. KEATING IV

PO1 Charles H. Keating IV, 31, of San Diego, CA, died May 3, 2016, in Tall Usqf, Iraq, of combat related causes. Petty Officer First Class Keating was assigned to a West Coast-based Navy SEAL Team.

#### TRIBUTE TO RICHARD GIL KERLIKOWSKE

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my friend from the Department of Homeland Security—U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Richard Gil Kerlikowske, who is retiring in January 2017. I have known Gil since his days as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, during which time he worked tirelessly to promote policy reforms, particularly in the area of substance abuse treatment. In 2013, he visited North Dakota at my request and saw firsthand the substance abuse dilemma that we were experiencing in the western part of the State. He worked with me to direct Federal resources to assist our State partners in reducing drug abuse, and for that, I will always be grateful.

Gil was appointed Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, CBP, in 2014, and, as a Senator on the committee that oversees CBP, I saw firsthand the dedication he brought to the position. On his retirement, it is fitting that we recognize the successes achieved under his leadership.

Gil worked to counter terrorism and transnational crime by creating a counter-network capability to identify and disrupt illicit networks and adapt to emerging threats along the border and abroad, placing under one roof the National Targeting-Center Passenger and Cargo facilities to enhance the agency's efficiency and effectiveness in identifying potential high-risk individuals and freight.

He made efforts to enhance transparency and accountability by implementing the CBP Integrity Strategy, enhancing the agency's ability to address corruption and misconduct in the workforce; initiating a review and redesign of CBP's complaint and discipline system to promote a timely, transparent, and accountable dispute resolution process; fostering the agency's commitment to respond to use of force incidents by creating an incident team to conduct investigations and by initiating a National Use of Force Review Board to assess policy compliance and best law enforcement practices;

implementing firearms and less-lethal use of force simulator training; implementing National Standards on Transport, Escort, Detention, and Search, the first nationwide standards that govern interaction with detained individuals.

He engaged stakeholders and partners globally to enhance U.S. border security. Such actions include signing new preclearance agreements with Sweden and the Dominican Republic; creating increased security, economic growth opportunities, and an improved passenger experience with CBP performing the same immigration, Customs, and agriculture inspections of air passengers on foreign soil prior to boarding a direct flight to the United States; assisting the Government of Tanzania in establishing a sophisticated canine program to combat the smuggling of contraband; and sponsoring ten Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements with various countries.

He worked to advance border security and management by addressing the surge of unaccompanied alien children and family units by enhancing the agency's capabilities and coordination with Federal partners while sustaining all border security responsibilities; deploying advanced technological solutions to provide additional layers of surveillance; initiating a Naloxone pilot program, becoming the first Federal law enforcement agency to train and equip officers with the potentially lifesaving drug for the treatment of overdoses; installing facial comparison technology in two airports and continuing work towards a comprehensive biometric exit system; establishing the Missing Migrant Initiative in the south Texas corridor—a proactive program to establish preventative procedures in order to preserve human life.

He worked to enhance economic competitiveness through lawful trade and travel with a continued commitment to the strong partnership between the U.S. and Canada by leading CBP to deliver on key Beyond the Border Action Plan commitments related to joint commerce and travel facilitation and security initiatives; transitioning to the Automated Commercial Environment, which serves as the "single window" for the electronic transmission of import and export information for 47 agencies; streamlining the import-export process and eliminating more than 200 forms; developing ten centers for excellence and expertise to facilitate trade for compliant importers; achieving positive results in CBP's Traveler Satisfaction Survey administered at the top 25 airports between September 2015 and February 2016.

He promoted organizational integration, innovation, and agility by raising levels of engagement and commitment higher than at any other time since 2011, according to the 2016 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. He led creation of advanced hiring hubs and other recruitment initiatives that re-

duced overall costs and hiring delays for CBP officers and Border Patrol agents. The agency was recognized by Monster.com and Military.com's "Best Companies for Veterans 2016" as the second best organization for veterans among government and private sector employers.

I would like Congress to recognize the significance of these accomplishments and to express my appreciation and the appreciation of the American people for Gil Kerlikowske's selfless dedication to service. I wish him the best of luck as he pursues the next chapter of his life.

#### HONORING OFFICER JOSE GILBERT VEGA

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Police Officer Jose Gilbert Vega, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and uncle who was tragically killed in the line of duty on October 8, 2016.

Jose "Gil" Vega was born in Texas to a family of migrant farm workers. When Gil was 6 years old his family relocated to Coachella, CA, where he graduated from Indio High School. In 1979, Gil began his career in law enforcement by serving as a reserve police officer for the Indio Police Department. He was hired as a community service officer by the Palm Springs Police Department in 1982, and the following year, he accepted additional responsibilities as a jail and reserve field training officer. Gil's hard work and dedication was recognized in 1985 when the city of Palm Springs hired him as a police officer trainee. Upon completion of his program at the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Academy, Gil was promoted to police officer.

Officer Vega worked on various assignments throughout his career, including serving as a detective for the Riverside Auto Theft Interdiction Detail, RAID, and the Palm Springs Crimes Against Property Unit. Over the course of three decades, Officer Vega mentored over 30 police officers and was consistently recognized for his commitment to his job and the community. He was awarded a lifesaving medal for performing CPR on an infant in 2010 and received the Medal of Merit in 2013. He is also the only officer in the history of the Palm Springs Police Department to have been selected twice by his peers as "Officer of the Year," in 1992 and 2011.

Officer Vega truly embodied the very best of law enforcement and his courageous service will be forever remembered. On behalf of the people of California whom Officer Vega served so bravely, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife, Susana; his eight children; and his entire extended family.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN LEWIS LARKIN O'HERN III

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize U.S. Army CPT Lewis Larkin O'Hern III for his extraordinary dedication to duty and