

all very proud. Together, this group ran a subcommittee that oversaw how government programs are run and tried to improve them. Later, Mary ran the staff of the Senate Aging Committee as well, working to improve the lives of older Americans.

Once I got to know Mary and her work habits, I used to joke with her that the Nuns must have really gotten to her in Catholic school—I had never seen anyone who would stay so late, work so hard, or be so easily made to feel guilty about leaving anything undone. A simple raised eyebrow could send her back to her desk until midnight.

A truly dedicated mother, Mary understood deeply the difficult balance between being a good parent and being a professional. But instead of complaining about it, she took action—helping to create the Senate Child Care Center so that her children and others could get the highest quality child care and pre-school education.

Because of Mary Gerwin and her energy and innate sense of fairness and compassion, here are some of the ways our country is different, and better:

—Disabled Americans live in greater dignity.

—The savings of older Americans are better protected from investment fraud.

—There is less fraud and abuse in the health care system.

—People who receive Medicaid and live in nursing homes are treated better.

—The government spends its contracting dollars more wisely, resulting in billions of dollars saved.

—More research money is spent fighting conditions such as Parkinson's Disease and spinal cord injuries.

There was another effort that Mary championed, and it is called the Independent Counsel Act. Not everyone loved this law. My old boss, President Clinton, really didn't love it. But we worked hard on it because the law said, in effect, no one is above the law, even the President. Mary Gerwin kept this law alive almost single-handedly. Many people, particularly in our own party, opposed this effort. Mary fought for it anyway, and she won.

When I went to the Pentagon, I asked Mary to come with me. She was the person I turned to health issues affecting our troops, and there were many such issues. She worked with me and with a deeply talented public servant, Rudy De Leon, who also became a good friend to Mary. She didn't just know the right answers—she found out from the troops what they needed.

Even in times when her illness was sapping her strength, she was traveling to Korea, to Bosnia, to Saudi Arabia to talk to our forces and find out how the Department of Defense could serve them better.

She came with Janet and me in 1999 for our annual holiday visit to the troops, which is a very arduous trip involving several countries in just a few days and in bad weather. But she wanted to go, and she brought great comfort to the many troops she spent time with.

After I left office, Secretary Rumsfeld asked Mary to stay on, and she worked well into June before she became too weary. She loved working with the troops. In this way, she was like the father she never knew, who was a Navy recruiter and loved helping young sailors with their problems.

I mention a sampling of Mary's accomplishments for a reason—to underscore the good that can be done in a life of public service. Mary's accomplishments would be extremely impressive if they were spread over a 50 year career. She had such a short time, and she did so much.

Her accomplishments would also be impressive if they were all she did. But she

saved her best energy for being a wife and a mother, as well as a daughter and a sister.

You only have to spend a few minutes with Katie and Kristen to see what kind of mother Mary has been, as well as what kind of father Ed has been. Katie and Kristen are exemplary young women—apples who have not fallen very far from the tree. And Mary and Ed had one of the best marriages I knew of—supportive and positive and loving at all times, even the bad times.

It is remarkable to reflect on Mary's degree of professional accomplishment and personal success when we consider the inescapable fact that the last ten years of her life were spent fighting an awful illness. The pain and difficulty she endured is unimaginable to most of us. Many of us would have given into despair. Mary stayed positive and productive even in the worst of times. She hated to be thought of as sick. She hated for people to cut her any slack because of her illness.

It is tempting for us all to be angry and feel cheated about a life which ended so soon and had so much suffering in the last ten years. I knew Mary for 20 years, and I wish I had 20 more with her. But we know that we were lucky to know her at all. Rarely in life are we fortunate enough to appreciate the truly special people in our lives. Mary was someone you could count on. She touched all of our lives. She made us laugh, she astonished us with her bravery and devotion to God. There will never be a day that her smile, her love, and her courage will be far from our thoughts.

On September 11, a great many friends and colleagues of ours at the Pentagon, and many more we didn't know in New York, passed from this world to a better place. Last Tuesday, they were joined by a very special angel. Mary, we will miss you.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended for an additional 15 minutes to accommodate my remarks this morning.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you very much, Madam President. I know Senator FEINSTEIN is here. I intend to be brief this morning.

EMERGENCY TECHNOLOGY CORPS

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, this morning I want to discuss a proposal which I think is important in light of the tragic events that unfolded on September 11, 2001.

As all of us now understand, the communications infrastructure in New York, Washington, DC, and indeed the whole country, was severely challenged

that day. Wireless telephone networks were severely overloaded and crashed. Wireless Internet access was suspended. Telephone lines were cut, and communications for people literally in communities around the east coast of the United States came to a standstill. Even the immediate communication needs of rescue workers, victims, families, and aid groups were a huge struggle to coordinate. Survivors often couldn't let family members know they were safe, and families of victims had no immediate central clearinghouse to find information or file missing person reports.

The hospitals were inundated with searches, requests for help, and offers of aid but with no way to match them to each other. Even some of this country's premier aid organizations that have done such a marvelous job helping rescue workers, survivors, and victims' families faced immediate and severe challenges with respect to information technology infrastructure. The New York Times drew a conclusion with which I strongly agree. They said: There needs to be new ways to set up emergency information systems.

That is what I would like to propose this morning. It seems to me that what this country needs is essentially a technology equivalent of the National Guard, an emergency technology guard—I have been calling it in my mind Net Guard, or a national emergency technology guard—that in times of crisis would be in a position to mobilize the Nation's information technology, or IT, community to action quickly, just as the National Guard is ready to move during emergencies.

It seems to me that in our leading technology companies in this Nation there are the brains and the equipment to put in place net guard, or this information technology guard, that could be deployed in communities across the Nation when we face tragedies such as we saw in New York City.

A national volunteer organization of trained and well-coordinated units of information technology professionals from our leading technology companies ought to be in a position to stand at ready with the designated computer equipment, satellite dishes, wireless communicators, and other equipment to quickly recreate and repair compromised communications and technology infrastructure.

With congressional support, the leaders of our Nation's technology companies could organize themselves, sell their employees and their resource for this purpose. Medium- and small-sized businesses would be able to contribute once a national framework is put in place. Certainly the resources from the standpoint of the Federal level need not be extensive. Individuals could be designated from existing human resource programs of major and medium-sized firms and the technology professionals would be trained to perform specific tasks in the event of an emergency.