

priority. This amendment is the least we can do for them, in light of the sacrifices they have made for our country.

This amendment is an important bipartisan effort to help protect our Nation's public safety officers on the job. I have been pleased to work with my Republican cosponsors, Senator GREGG, Senator DEWINE, and Senator SNOWE. This amendment will measurably add to the caliber of our defense against threats to the security of our communities. It will also further this country's historic commitment to collective bargaining. I can point out to the Senate the substance of this amendment, in legislation, passed overwhelmingly from our Senate Labor and Human Resource Committee.

I know that no one in this room needs to be reminded of the heroic efforts made by the country's public safety officers in the last 10 days. The pictures of tired, dust covered firefighters confronting unimaginable horror are permanently emblazoned in our minds.

The courage and dedication of those who died—including Peter Ganci, the chief of the New York Fire Department; William Feehan, the first deputy commissioner; and Mychal Judge, the chaplain of the Department—set a shining example for all of us. There were 344 firefighters and paramedics who died in the World Trade Center rescue effort. They were members of locals 94 and 854 of the International Association of Firefighters. And, just miles from the Capitol, hundreds of firefighters risked their lives in the rescue efforts at the Pentagon. America needs these men and women, now more than ever, and it is no exaggeration to say that we owe our lives to them.

This amendment will ensure that firefighters, police officers, correctional officers, and emergency medical personnel will be afforded the fundamental right to bargain collectively with their employers. The amendment guarantees the basic rights that are necessary to meet that goal—to form and join a union; to bargain over hours, wages, and working conditions; to sign legally enforceable contracts; and to deal with an impasse in negotiations.

This proposal follows in the honorable traditions of our country's labor laws, by recognizing the importance of collective bargaining to improve job conditions, increasing worker safety, and improving productivity. Most importantly, this amendment will lead to safer working conditions for public safety officers and to enhanced safety for the public that they serve.

As we now know all too well, firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical personnel serve in some of the country's most dangerous, strenuous, and stressful jobs. They are frequently asked to risk—and sometimes give—their lives to protect the safety of others. We have a moral obligation to do whatever we can to increase the safety of these critical jobs—and thereby to

add to the Nation's defense against threats to the public's health and safety.

It is clear that this amendment will help us to meet these goals. The men and women who serve on the front lines in providing firefighting services, law enforcement services, and emergency medical services know what it takes to create safer working conditions. Ensuring that these professionals have a right to collective bargaining will give them a voice in decisions that can literally make a life-or-death difference on the job. Making such a difference for our country's public safety officers will, by definition, improve our collective safety.

Available data prove that collective bargaining enhances safety. These data show that States that lack collective bargaining laws have death rates for firefighters that are nearly double that of States in which bargaining takes place.

In States with collective bargaining, there were 1.5 firefighters killed in the line of duty for every 10 thousand firefighters. In States without collective bargaining, 2.5 out of every 10 thousand firefighters were killed on the job. Similarly, in 1993, firefighters in 9 of the 10 States with the highest firefighters death rate lacked collective bargaining protection.

This amendment will also save money for States and local communities. A study by the International Association of Fire Fighters shows that States and municipalities that give firefighters the right to discuss workplace issues have lower fire department budgets than States without such laws.

When workers who actually do the job are able to provide advice on their work conditions, there are fewer injuries, better morale, better information on new technologies, and more efficient ways to provide the services.

The amendment also accomplishes its goals in a reasonable and moderate way. The amendment requires that public safety officers be given the opportunity to bargain collectively; it does not require that employers adopt agreements.

Nor does it regulate the content of any agreements that are reached. Where States have collective bargaining laws that substantially provide for the modest minimum standards set forth in the bill—as a majority of States already do—moreover, those States will be unaffected by the legislation.

Where States do not have such laws, they may choose to enact them or to allow the Federal Labor Relations Authority to establish procedures for bargaining between public safety officers and their employers. This approach respects existing State law and gives each State the authority to choose the way in which it will comply with the requirements set by this amendment. States will have full discretion to make decisions regarding their imple-

mentation and enforcement of the basic rights set forth in this proposal.

This approach respects existing State law and gives each State the authority to choose the way in which it will comply with the requirements of this proposal. States will have full discretion to make decisions regarding the implementation and enforcement of the basic rights in this amendment.

This amendment will not supersede State laws which already adequately provide for the exercise of—or are more protective of—collective bargaining rights by public safety officers. This amendment is intended to ensure that public safety officers have a role in addressing their wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment; and to improve the safety and welfare of public safety officers and the communities they serve.

It is a matter of basic fairness to give these courageous men and women the same rights that have long been enjoyed by other workers. They put their lives on the line to protect us every day. They deserve to have an effective voice on the job, and improvements in their work conditions will benefit their entire community.

I commend my cosponsors for their leadership on this important proposal, and I urge the Senate to approve it.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. HOLLINGS are printed in Today's record under "Morning Business.")

Mr. HOLLINGS. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CORZINE).

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 2044

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise in support of the amendment offered by Senator DASCHLE which deals with the rights of police officers and firefighters—especially—firefighters to have the opportunity to organize in collective bargaining agreements.

This amendment is timely in light of what we have seen relative to the commitment of our firefighters across the