

example, there were only two water spigots available for all the prisoners. The men were fed tiny portions once a day.

Fran spent 6 months at Camp O'Donnell before being moved to Camp Cabanatuan. Fran spent an additional year at that camp. He worked mostly in the hospital—helping other POWs survive their imprisonment.

Finally, Fran was transferred to Japan where he was kept at the Hiro Hata POW camp and forced to work slave labor. He was held 30 miles from Hiroshima. He would later describe the atomic bomb that signaled the end of World War II and the end of his 3½ years of captivity.

On September 2, 1945, the men at the Hiro Hata prison camp conducted a liberation ceremony. The men gathered together and sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Fran Agnes returned home to the United States weighing approximately 100 pounds.

Most of us can only imagine the horror that men like Fran Agnes endured as prisoners of war at the hands of the Japanese. After a short stint back at home in Wenatchee, Fran re-enlisted with the Army Air Corps before it became the Air Force. He served in the Air Force for two decades and retired at the rank of Captain. Fran worked for Washington State for 25 years.

Fran had a big family as well. In addition to his wife Marlene, he had three daughters: Rose, Sonya, and Kathleen. I spent a few minutes with Fran's daughters yesterday, and in each of them, I was reminded of their father. Fran also had two sons, David and Gregory, as well as 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

Fran was involved in numerous veterans service organizations, particularly the American Ex-Prisoners of War, which is holding its winter meeting here in Washington, DC, this week. Fran served as national commander of the American Ex-POWs in 1990 and 1991. He was also chairman of the Governor's Advisory Action Committee in Washington State. Fran was chairman of the Tahoma National Cemetery Group in Washington.

I think it is appropriate that we memorialize Fran's many sacrifices and his great service to our Nation. Today, I have asked my staff to work with the Tahoma National Cemetery, with the Agnes family, and with the Washington veterans community to discuss naming an appropriate place at Tahoma after Fran Agnes.

In addition, I call upon my Senate colleagues to join me in support of the Francis W. Agnes Prisoner of War Benefits Act of 2003. This legislation clarifies who is eligible for POW benefits through the VA and ensures our POWs can receive care for a number of ailments related to their captivity. The legislation is important to all POWs, and a similar measure has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

Fran wouldn't ask us to single out his fellow Pacific theatre POWs for

health care, but I know he would take special pride in the passage of this legislation because it is so important to our prisoners of war who survived such harsh treatment at the hands of the Japanese in World War II. I encourage all of my colleagues in the Senate to support the Francis W. Agnes Prisoner of War Benefits Act of 2003.

Fran Agnes was a great American. I was blessed to know him and work with him. Veterans everywhere were blessed to have him as a fellow soldier and airman. With his passing, it is time we acknowledge his service and commit his memory to our history as an example to us all.

Even though I can't call upon him for his guidance and support, Fran will always be there for me. After all the time we spent together—and all the efforts we worked on together—I feel that I know what he would want me to do. And I pledge to continue to work very closely with veterans from my State and with his family to build on his legacy.

I hope this tribute captures for the Senate the many contributions of a true patriot. Mr. President, Fran Agnes called himself a survivor. We—those who knew him and his life of service to others—call him an inspiration.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS,

Washington, DC, February 13, 2003.

Mrs. MARLENE AGNES,
Everett, Washington.

DEAR MRS. AGNES: On behalf of America's 25 million veterans, please accept my sincerest condolences on the death of your husband, Fran. Although I am aware that mere words cannot ease your sorrow, or that of your children and grandchildren, be certain that my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Fran's service to America is legend in the veterans' community. He and all the men and women of his generation who answered America's call during World War II, will be long remembered for their monumental struggle and decisive victory. However, Fran's service and sacrifice at Bataan, and later as a prisoner of war, were as great as any American has ever been asked to endure.

Fran was an American patriot who served his country twice-over. Once in a uniform of its military services, and once-again as a pillar of the Nation's veterans constituency. As National Commander of America's Ex Prisoners of War, Fran's leadership bore the same indelible hallmarks that distinguished his wartime service . . . exemplary ability, great honor, unflinching courage, and true compassion. His contributions at once strengthened our Republic and enriched the lives of its citizen-soldiers who, like him, had borne the burden of captivity.

Quite simply, Fran was an ordinary American who served in extraordinary ways. He represented the best of what it means to be an American, and our Nation is lessened by his passing.

Mrs. Agnes, we who were privileged to know Fran, mourn with you and your family.

Sincerely yours,

ANTHONY J. PRINCIPI.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. In the last Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred August 24, 2000 in Allentown, PA. A 24-year-old man, Michael Gambler, shot a 15-year-old at a party after the teen touched him on the arm. According to witnesses, party-goers suggested the teen was gay and teased the victim and Gambler prior to the shooting. After the teen touched his arm, Gambler retrieved a shotgun and shot the victim in the forehead.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

ASSASSINATION OF SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER ZORAN DJINDJIC

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to honor a man of courage, conviction and integrity who was recently taken from his people and this world in the most brutal and shocking of circumstances.

On Wednesday, March 12, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was slain in Belgrade, assassinated, gunned down, leaving his Belgrade office. He was, tragically, only 50 years old, and was taken from us long before his time. To his wife Rizica and his two young children, Jovana and Luka, I extend my deepest condolences.

I had the pleasure of meeting Prime Minister Djindjic in 2001, during a visit to Belgrade. He was best known to Americans and the international community for his central role in the downfall of former Yugoslav dictator, Slobodan Milosevic, in October 2000. It was Djindjic who, in 2001, took the principled decision to render Milosevic to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, where he is at this moment facing trial for genocide and crimes against humanity.

It was this courage, this stand for integrity, that won Prime Minister Djindjic not only the respect of the international community, but the love and admiration of the people of Serbia, whom he helped to free from the grips of dictatorship, oppression, and cruelty.

Prime Minister Djindjic was someone who fought for the needs of his people. He devoted his life to the fight for progress, reform, and democracy, and a better life for the people of Serbia. Ultimately, he gave his life for that fight.

He was imprisoned for his activities as a student dissident against the repressive Communist Yugoslav regime in the 1970s, but this did not diminish his zeal. In 1989, Djindjic, along with a group of dissident writers and intellectuals, founded the Serbian Democratic Party. One year later, he was elected its chairman, and in 1994, its president. In the 1990s, as a member and a leader of Serbia's Parliament, he remained at the forefront of the dissident movement, resisting the oppression of a new generation of post-Communist dictators, this time bent on ethnic cleansing and genocide.

As his courage grew, so did the people's respect for him. In 1996, the people of Belgrade freely elected him the first non-Communist mayor since World War II. It was in that position that he built the popular base and credibility that served him so well in the historical role he was about to play, in the downfall of Slobodan Milosevic. Djindjic was one of the chief strategists behind the September 24, 2002, Yugoslav Presidential elections and the October 5, 2000, uprising that resulted in Milosevic's overthrow. In December 2000, he led the Democratic Opposition of Serbia—a coalition of 18 parties spanning a broad range of the political spectrum—into Serbia's parliamentary elections, and won an impressive 65 percent of the popular vote. The DOS elected Djindjic to be Prime Minister of Serbia on January 25, 2001.

That popularity speaks well of Zoran Djindjic, but it speaks volumes about the people of Serbia. After years—decades—of Communist and fascist dictatorship, the spirit of the Serbian people arose valiant, triumphant because the desire for freedom cannot be crushed. Prime Minister Djindjic was, in a large sense, the embodiment of their determination, their yearning to be free. Each time this man spoke of freedom and liberty, of reform and democracy, the people of Serbia supported him, sustained him, elevated him to lead them, and followed them into the brighter future that he hoped fervently to help them build.

It appears that it was, ultimately, his pledge and his actions to stamp out corruption and widespread organized crime that brought him into the assassin's sights.

In February, a truck swerved from its lane, headed directly for the motorcade carrying the Prime Minister, and narrowly missed. Prime Minister Djindjic very well could have been killed. Djindjic himself suggested that the incident might be the handiwork of members of organized crime rings, which flourished under Miloservic and remain linked to him to this day.

Just as he did not permit prison to diminish his energy, Prime Minister Djindjic did not let this danger impede him or dim his spirit. He pressed on, valiantly, in his campaign against the crime and corruption that corrodes his society.

The news of the Prime Minister's death has been a tremendous shock,

not only to the people of Serbia, but to the entire region. President Stjepan Mesić of Croatia has rightly described the assassination as "an act of madness," and raised concerns that this assassination will "slow down [Serbia's] progress towards democracy."

I certainly understand the Croatian President's concern. It would be a dishonor to the memory of Prime Minister Djindjic were his fears to be realized. After centuries of conflict and decades of oppression and crippling violence, Serbia and the entire Balkan region have made remarkable strides toward peace, democracy, economic development, and a better life for the people of all nations in the region. The United States has played a crucial role in furthering that progress. For the past 10 years, in Bosnia Hercegovina, in Kosovo, the United States has fought—diplomatically and militarily—to stop the forces of oppression and genocide, and to support the forces of liberty and democracy.

There can be no greater way to remember this man than to ensure that his death will not be in vain, that his life's work will continue. And so, I urge all of us who are friends and supporters of democracy, and those who fight for it, to redouble our commitment to and solidarity with those who stand, as Prime Minister Djindjic did, for a better, freer, more democratic future for the people of Serbia.

THE CHILD SUPPORT DISTRIBUTION ACT

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today to state my strong support for the Child Support Distribution Act of 2003, which Senator SNOWE and I introduced yesterday. I want to thank Senator SNOWE for continuing to work with me over the years on this important issue.

This bill takes significant steps toward ensuring that children receive the child support money they are owed and deserve. In fiscal year 2001, the public child support system collected child support payments for only 44 percent of its total caseload, up from 19 percent in 1995. Obviously, we still need to improve, but States are making real progress. It is time for Congress to take the next step and help States overcome a major obstacle to collecting child support for families.

There are many reasons why noncustodial parents may not be paying support for their children. Some are not able to pay because they don't have jobs or have fallen on hard times. Others may not pay because they are unfairly prevented from spending time with their children.

But other fathers don't pay because the public system actually discourages them from paying. Under current law, \$2.2 billion in child support is retained every year by the State and Federal Governments as repayment for welfare benefits—rather than delivered to the children to whom it is owed. Fifty-six

percent of that amount is for families who have left welfare. Since the money doesn't benefit their kids, fathers are discouraged from paying support. And mothers have no incentive to push for payment since the support doesn't go to them.

The current rules withhold a key source of income for low-income families that could help them maintain self-sufficiency. For low-income working families receiving child support, that support is the second-largest source of income for those families, after wages, according to the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan organization that studies social and governance issues. Families who receive child support can often avoid going on welfare. When low-income working families get child support, but not welfare, child support makes up 35 percent of their income.

It is time for Congress to change this system and encourage States to distribute more child support to families. My home State of Wisconsin has already been doing this for several years and is seeing great results. In 1997, I worked with my State to institute an innovative program of passing through child support payments directly to families. An evaluation of the Wisconsin program clearly shows that when child support payments are delivered to families, noncustodial parents are more apt to pay, and to pay more. In addition, Wisconsin has found that, overall, this policy does not increase government costs. That makes sense because "passing through" support payments to families means they have more of their own resources, and are less apt to depend on public help to meet other needs such as food, transportation or child care.

We now have a key opportunity to encourage all States to follow Wisconsin's example. This legislation gives States options and strong incentives to send more child support directly to families who are working their way off—or are already off—public assistance. Not only will this create the right incentives for noncustodial parents to pay, but it will also simplify the job for States, who currently face an administrative nightmare in following the complicated rules of the current system.

We know that creating the right incentives for noncustodial parents to pay support and increasing collections has long-term benefits. People who can count on child support are more likely to stay in jobs and stay off public assistance.

This legislation finally brings the Child Support Enforcement program into the post-welfare reform era, shifting its focus from recovering welfare costs to increasing child support to families so they can sustain work and maintain self-sufficiency. After all, it is only fair that if we are asking parents to move off welfare, stay off welfare, and take financial responsibility for their families, then we in Congress