

serves over 20 million people each month at an annual cost of over \$20 billion.

Ms. O'Neil came to the Department in November of 1968 following graduation from Ohio Wesleyan University where she majored in politics and government. She has spent the majority of her career in various positions with the Food Stamp Program, with the exception of 6 years that were spent in the agency's Office of Regional Operations. She has been USDA's main career official on all Food Stamp Program legislation since 1984.

Since that time, Ms. O'Neil has worked closely with Congress to help craft food stamp legislation. She has been available at any hour of the day, including weekends, to provide her wise counsel. She spent countless hours and worked tirelessly to assist the Agriculture Committee on significant legislation, including numerous farm bills and the landmark 1996 welfare reform bill.

In 2003, due to Ms. O'Neil's exemplary work, she received a Presidential Rank Award recognizing her contribution to the reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program.

In her years of Federal service, Ms. O'Neil has overseen many program improvements, including replacing paper coupons with electronic benefit delivery, setting records for payment accuracy and extending many policy options to States to improve customer service.

Ms. O'Neil is a native of New Jersey and now resides in Alexandria, VA.

I commend Ms. Bonny O'Neil for her many years of devoted service to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and for the outstanding work she has done throughout her distinguished career. I congratulate her on the occasion of her retirement and extend my best wishes for much happiness and satisfaction in the years ahead.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I too wish to pay tribute to the accomplishments of Ms. Bonny O'Neil and thank her for her many years of dedicated service to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ms. O'Neil has done an outstanding job as the senior career official responsible for the Food Stamp Program. Under her very capable leadership, this important program has been greatly improved.

During the writing of the recent farm bill, which took almost 2 years, Ms. O'Neil worked tirelessly with the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on the food stamp provisions. Her expertise in this area was invaluable and she was always available to provide assistance. After the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 was signed into law, Ms. O'Neil worked to implement the food stamp provisions, including the large number of State flexibility sections contained in the act.

The quality of her efforts in this regard are obvious. In the one year since the farm bill passed, numerous States

have already implemented or are planning to implement important State options that significantly improve the Food Stamp Program. As a result, we are helping working Americans in their efforts to enter and stay in the workforce and also making sure that, for millions of American children, the shadow of hunger does not loom so darkly.

In always remembering that her job is to serve Americans and to better their lives, rather than just to run a program from an office in Washington, Bonny meets and surpasses the highest ideals of civil service.

I thank Ms. O'Neil for her years of service to our Nation and wish her well in her retirement.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in expressing my sincere gratitude to Ms. Bonny O'Neil for her more than 34 years of devoted service to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As a result of her wealth of knowledge and experience with the Food Stamp Program, Ms. O'Neil was an invaluable resource to the entire Congress as we crafted the 1996 welfare reform law. Ms. O'Neil's wisdom, patience and good humor were vitally important during the long process of writing that landmark legislation.

I thank Ms. O'Neil for her many accomplishments and for her honorable service to this Nation.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I, too, join my colleagues today to recognize and honor Ms. Bonny O'Neil upon her retirement from the Federal Government. Ms. O'Neil is a true public servant—in all the best sense of that phrase—diligent, hardworking, attentive to details, willing to dig in and truly analyze both sides of each issue, smart, totally honest, a woman of her word, and driven by a desire to do the right thing.

She is to be commended for serving her Nation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture so well. She also served the Congress well by providing us with clear and informative answers, and guiding us through complex issues. I know that she worked closely with my nutrition counsel Ed Barron for many years—both when he was at USDA and while he worked for me starting in 1987. On many occasions late at night during a conference, I would hear someone say: "Let's call Bonny to get the facts."

Bonny spent all but six of those years in various positions with the Food Stamp Program, where she currently serves as the Associate Deputy Administrator.

Ms. O'Neil provided valuable assistance during our work on nutrition programs, food stamp amendments and several farm bills. Anyone who has ever worked on a farm bill knows that it is an extremely complicated task that requires many long hours, including nights and weekends. Her attention to detail and willingness to be available at any time, day or night, was most appreciated.

I thank Ms. Bonny O'Neil for her distinguished service to the public good and wish her well in her retirement.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, 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 in Farwest, WA. On September 13, 2001, a Sikh cab driver was stopped by a 21-year-old man who had hailed his cab. Once inside the cab, the passenger verbally accosted the driver accusing him of being a terrorist and that he had no right to be in the United States. The passenger subsequently grabbed the driver around the neck and choked him. Before the driver was able to escape, the passenger punched the victim in the face, grabbed fistfuls of his beard and ripped off parts of his turban. The attacker was eventually arrested by a passing police officer.

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.

#### ORBIT ACT

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to comment on H.R. 2312, which allows for some technical corrections to the ORBIT Act. Although neither Inmarsat nor Intelsat has yet conducted the IPO that the ORBIT Act provided for, there is one satellite provider that has fulfilled the ORBIT Act's original requirements in this regard. That provider is New Skies Satellites, which has separated itself from its one-time parent Intelsat, conducted an IPO under challenging market conditions, substantially diluted its shareholder base through both the IPO and a recent 10 percent share buyback, and become a full-fledged competitor in the satellite marketplace. New Skies has asked that we consider some amendments to the Act that would acknowledge and recognize its fully independent status. While the abbreviated process leading to the Senate's consideration of this bill today did not permit full consideration of those issues, I am open to listening to the arguments for such changes in the context of a broader review of the ORBIT Act and its implementation.

#### WEST VIRGINIA DAY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I rise to commemorate the 140th