

that friendship evolved into love, and they married in March of 1996. This March they will celebrate their eighth anniversary.

Lee and Bobbi plan to spend a few well-deserved months in Mexico, relaxing and enjoying the life they have established together. Of course, they will spend a lot of time with their seven children and six grandchildren. And Lee will now have more time to ride his Harley, possibly in the upcoming Street Vibrations festival, an annual celebration for motorcycle enthusiasts in Sparks and nearby Reno.

As they look forward to retirement, Lee and Bobbi can also look back on a job well done, a life well lived, and the important role they played in Sparks, NV.

So today, on behalf of all Nevadans, I offer congratulations and gratitude to Lee and Bobbi Leighton.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to CPT Chris Soelzer, a resident of Sturgis, SD who died on December 24, 2003, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Captain Soelzer was a member of the Headquarters Company of the 5th Engineer Battalion, which was based out of Fort Leonard Wood, MO. He was among three soldiers killed when a roadside bomb hit a military convoy near Samarra.

Answering America's call to the military, Captain Soelzer wasn't sure he was going to make a career out of the Army. However, according to his brother, "he was a soldier, that is what he lived for." A born soldier, he had attended Kemper Military School and College after graduating from Sturgis High School. A member of the school band, chorus group, and the track team, friends remember him as a quiet and gentle person. Captain Soelzer's former principal recalls that "he was a real gentleman, a real nice kid who was involved in a lot of things." Dave Mueller, a friend from high school remembers Captain Soelzer as a bright individual and remarked that "Academics was his big thing. I think he was close to straight A's."

Captain Soelzer served our country and, as a hero, died fighting for it. He served as a model example of the loyalty and dedication in the preservation of freedom. The thoughts and prayers of my family as well as the rest of the country's are with his family during this time of mourning. Our thoughts continue to be with all those families with children, spouses, and loved ones serving overseas.

Captain Soelzer led a full life, committed to his family, his Nation, and his community. It was his incredible dedication to helping others that will serve as his greatest legacy. Our Nation is a far better place because of Captain Soelzer's contributions, and, while his family, friends, and Nation will miss him very much, the best way

to honor his life is to emulate his commitment to service and community. In the words of Dave Mueller, "He was also a person who you'd barely have to know him and he would do everything for you."

I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my sympathies to the family of Captain Soelzer. I know that he will always be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

SERGEANT DENNIS A. CORRAL

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of Dennis A. Corral, a fellow Nebraskan and Sergeant in the U.S. Army. Sergeant Corral was killed on January 1 in Baghdad, Iraq. He was 33 years old.

Sergeant Corral served as a supply sergeant in Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, based in Fort Riley, KS.

A resident of Kearney, NE, Sergeant Corral was a dedicated soldier who was committed to his family and country. Sergeant Corral volunteered to deploy early so that another soldier with a wife and children could spend more time at home, his mother, Yolanda, said. She described her son as always willing to "step forward if they need help."

In addition to his mother, Sergeant Corral is survived by his father, Victor, and brothers, Peter, Christopher, and Rodney. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of them at this difficult time.

Sergeant Corral and thousands of brave American service men and women confront danger every day in Iraq and their tremendous sacrifices must never be taken for granted or forgotten. For his service, bravery, and sacrifice, I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring Sergeant Dennis Corral.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY, 2004

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, throughout California and across America, millions of people gathered yesterday to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth. Each year, thanks to a 1983 Federal law that I was proud to vote for, we take the third Monday of January to commemorate Dr. King's birthday.

In his immortal "I Have a Dream" speech, Dr. King shared his vision of a land where people of every religion, race, and creed could realize the American dream of freedom and opportunity. In the words of his wife, Coretta Scott King, we honor Dr. King's dream of "a vibrant, multiracial nation that has a place at the table for children of every race and room at the inn for every needy child." On Martin Luther King Day, we take this opportunity to reflect on the dream of an inclusive society in which all people are truly created equal.

On this day and all year long, Americans share in Dr. King's extraordinary commitment to improving the lives of

others. We remember his dream and take an active role in making it a reality. Throughout our Nation, people help those in need: they feed the hungry, house the poor, heal the sick, and offer a guiding hand to at-risk youth.

This week, as we mark the national celebration of Dr. King's birthday, let us not merely reflect on his work, let us live his legacy. On this Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, I ask you to join me in vowing to make Dr. King's dream a reality. Let us come together to take positive—yes, affirmative—action to give every American a real shot at the dream.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, yesterday, we celebrated Martin Luther King Day. For many of us, this day was a time to reflect on the progress we have made in protecting civil rights and the work that remains. Dr. King once said:

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

No matter how far our Nation has come, we must never rest contented with the mistaken notion that we have done enough to protect our fellow citizens.

In 1998, a young man named Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten and left for dead simply because he was gay. He lived for 6 days in the hospital, just long enough for his family to gather and say goodbye. Matthew's story, and the heinous dragging murder of James Byrd 6 months earlier, brought hate crimes to the forefront of the national discourse. It taught us a profound lesson about the hatred that still lives in some of our citizens.

Hate crimes are violent acts intended by their perpetrators to send a message of animus and intimidation towards those whose religion, race, or sexual orientation might differ from their own. They are a violation of everything our country stands for. As Attorney General Ashcroft has said:

Criminal acts of hate run counter to what is best in America—our belief in equality and freedom.

Sadly, the number of reported hate crimes continues to grow at an alarming rate. The FBI catalogued over 9,700 hate crimes in 2001. That is an average of 26 hate crimes a day. At that pace, in the last 5 years, more than 47,000 hate crimes have been committed.

The current hate crimes law was enacted after the assassination of Dr. King, and it is woefully outdated. It does not apply to hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Even in cases of crimes based on race, religion, or ethnic background, the law only protects victims who were attacked when engaged in "federally protected activities" such as jury service, interstate travel, or voting.

It is time to update this law, and I believe we have finally developed compromise legislation that can pass Congress. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, LLEEA, is a bipartisan bill that will provide support to local authorities investigating and prosecuting hate violence.