

Today I rise to honor who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country.

A few days ago I stood in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the memory of 2LT Luke S. James.

Lieutenant James, 24, was a native of Hooker, OK, and a graduate of Oklahoma State University. He was killed in Iraq on January 27 during a roadside ambush near Iskandariyah.

Lieutenant James was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Infantry out of Fort Bragg, NC. He'd only been in Iraq a few days.

Our prayers and debt of appreciation now go to his family. He is survived here on the homefront by his wife Molly, his 6-month-old son, Bradley, his parents Brad and Arleen James, his sister Sharla, and his brother Kirby.

"That was his dream (to serve in the Army)," Molly James said in a recent interview. "He wasn't afraid to go. He was able to do his duty and die with honor."

As we watch the dawn of a new day in Iraq, we must never forget that the freedom we enjoy every day in America is bought at a price.

2LT Luke James did not die in vain. He died so that many others could live freely. And for that sacrifice, we are forever indebted. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family and with the troops who are putting their lives on the line in Iraq.

CONTROL AND DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE SOURCES

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern that the threat posed by the detonation of a "dirty bomb" has not been adequately addressed. Controlling access to the radioactive materials needed to fabricate such a weapon remains a challenge today, just as it did in the days immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Security improvements have been slow to come. Dirty bombs continue to threaten the people and the economy of the United States.

Radioactive sealed sources are all around us. They are used widely in medicine, research, industry, and agriculture. Some of these sources are more risky than others, and Congress must take action to ensure the control and safe disposal of those sources that pose the greatest risk. These sources, known as "greater-than-Class-C" sealed sources, are of major concern because of their potential for use in the fabrication of a dirty bomb.

To address this risk, I introduced S. 1045, the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Act of 2003, this past May. My bill addresses the efforts made by the Department of Energy, DOE, to recover and dispose of thousands of domestic greater-than-Class-C radiological sources. This measure was developed after three different U.S. General Accounting Office reports I requested showed that the efforts being made by DOE and

other Federal agencies to control and dispose of these radioactive sources, both domestically and internationally, have not gone far enough.

Provisions of S. 1045 were included in H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2003, but as debate over the energy bill continues, radioactive sources remain a threat to our country. Over the holidays, there was a serious concern about the possible detonation of a dirty bomb at one of the large open-air New Year's Eve celebrations around the country. The DOE took serious and prudent action to detect possible terrorist activities and thankfully this situation did not end in tragedy. However, next time we may not be so lucky. The lack of a safe, secure, and permanent disposal site for unwanted radioactive sealed sources places our country at risk.

Thousands of sealed sources await disposal, some requiring security measures greater than those in place at current storage facilities. The problem posed by these sources will not go away by itself. Universities and industry do not have the means or facilities to secure these materials and are seeking Federal Government assistance. In my own State, the University of Hawaii is currently seeking the assistance of the DOE to remove large unwanted radioactive sources, belonging to DOE, that are no longer useful for their research. While DOE is working on a solution, the sources remain in Hawaii awaiting disposal. My bill would require the DOE to fulfill their statutory obligation to develop a disposal facility for all of these sources, in consultation with Congress, and would also require that DOE explore Federal and non-Federal alternative disposal options to make sure that the best disposal method is chosen.

However, my concern over radioactive material does not end here. I will continue my work to improve Federal oversight of radioactive sources and devices. Just a few weeks ago in New Jersey, a gauge containing radioactive material was damaged, and its radioactive material is still missing. Creating a disposal facility for this class of radioactive waste is only the beginning of getting this problem under control. We need to improve the licensing and tracking of these widely used sources and devices, so that they will not fall into the wrong hands.

When the United States began non-proliferation efforts in the former Soviet Union, one of the first jobs was to begin consolidating nuclear weapons and fissile materials in secure facilities to await disposal or destruction. Due to worries about terrorists acquiring dirty bombs, the DOE is now working to secure radiological sources in many countries overseas. I support these efforts. A theft this month of cesium-137 in China re-emphasizes the need to work with other countries to collect and dispose of unwanted radiological materials. The cesium, stolen by scrap metal thieves, ended up being melted by a steel mill. The mill is now con-

taminated and will have to undergo expensive clean-up efforts. While this type of incident is less likely to happen in the U.S., we must learn from this, and take steps to protect our nation from these materials. We should take the lead in helping other nations secure their radioactive material, for the good of us all.

The bill that I introduced and which is cosponsored by Senators BINGAMAN and LANDRIEU, will give radiological sources and waste on American soil a safe and secure, permanent disposal facility. Before September 11, 2001, collecting and securing these sources was a matter of public safety, now it is a national security concern that demands the attention of Congress. I urge my colleagues to support the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Act of 2003, to ensure that our nation is better protected from the dangers of dirty bombs.

LESSONS FROM A CLEAN AIR LISTENING TOUR

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I have spoken many times about my serious concern for our Nation's deteriorating air quality. I would like to speak today on behalf of those Americans who are working tirelessly at the regional and local levels to protect our air quality, and who have expressed their concerns to me. Many Americans across the country feel that the Clean Air Act has not done enough to protect their health and their environment. They also worry that, under the leadership of our President, things will only get worse. They are taking action at the local and State levels, and State government is responding with real leadership. We need to support these actions with strong, Federal legislation to protect our current laws and improve our air quality.

On a nationwide Clean Air Listening Tour I initiated in 2003, I heard firsthand from Americans who are tired of getting sick from breathing dirty air, and tired of putting their children's health at risk from eating mercury-contaminated fish. In Asheville, NC, and in Boston, MA, the public demands that the Federal Government work immediately to clean their air.

Asheville is situated in close proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited National Park in the Nation at nine million visitors every year. Sadly, this majestic park is also the Nation's most polluted, as reported by the National Parks Conservation Association. Its visibility is tied for the worst with Mammoth Cave National Park, at a mere 14-mile range during the summer months. Under natural conditions, the vista should average around 80-miles.

The Smokies have the highest rate of acid precipitation among the parks, at thirty-five kilograms per hectare. This is six to seven times the nitrogen pollution that local soils can process. In fact, the highest peak in the Smokies can be as acidic as vinegar.