

men and women who serve our families and communities as law enforcement officers. I would also like to honor the memory of those who gave their lives in the line of duty. These officers, and their families, have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of others.

The first National Police Week was celebrated in 1962 when President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive Order designating May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as "Police Week." The weeklong tribute to our Nation's local, State and Federal police officers honors those who died in the line of duty and those who continue to serve and protect us every day at great personal risk.

According to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, 1,649 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty in the last 10 years. In 2004 alone, 153 officers lost their lives, including 7 from Michigan. As in past years, the names of these officers have been permanently engraved on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial along side more than 17,000 others.

We can further honor the sacrifices of these brave men and women by passing important legislation to support our law enforcement officers. That is why I have joined Senator BIDEN as a cosponsor of his COPS Reauthorization Act. The COPS program was created in 1994 and is designed to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in hiring additional police officers to reduce crime through the use of community policing. Nationwide, the COPS program has awarded more than \$11 billion in grants, resulting in the hiring of 118,000 additional police officers. Unfortunately, authorization for the COPS program was permitted to expire at the end of fiscal year 2000. Although the program has survived through continued annual appropriations, its funding has been significantly cut. The COPS Reauthorization Act would continue the COPS program for another 6 years at a funding level of \$1.15 billion per year, nearly double the amount appropriated for fiscal year 2005. Among other things, this funding would allow State and local governments to hire an additional 50,000 police officers and improve their ability to analyze crime data and DNA evidence. At a time when we are asking more of our police departments than ever before, I believe we should be devoting more resources to the COPS program, not less.

Supporting our law enforcement officers also requires that we take up and pass common sense legislation to help keep them safe while they carry out their duties. Shootings have been the leading cause of death for law enforcement officers over the last ten years and more can be done to keep powerful weapons out of the hands of violent criminals. We should listen to law enforcement groups like the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the International Brotherhood of

Police Officers, and the National Fraternal Order of Police which have called for reauthorization of the 1994 assault weapons ban. In addition we should be working to pass legislation to close loopholes that allow potential criminals to buy dangerous weapons like the Five-Seven armor-piercing handgun. Our law enforcement community deserves no less.

In honor of their memories, the names of law enforcement officers from Michigan who died in the line of duty during 2004 are:

Officer Matthew E. Bowens of Detroit, died February 16, 2004;

Officer Gary Cooper Davis of Bloomfield Township, died May 13, 2004;

Officer Jennifer T. Pettig of Detroit, died February 16, 2004;

Deputy Sheriff Perry Austin Fillmore of Clinton County, died March 27, 2004;

Deputy Sheriff John Kevin Gunsell of Otsego County, died September 12, 2004;

Officer Mark Anthony Sawyers of Sterling Heights, died June 5, 2004; and

Detective John Raymond Weir of Sault Ste. Marie, died November 7, 2004.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ALABAMA'S WINNERS OF THE WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION COMPETITION

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a group of students in my home State of Alabama. On April 30, 2005, students from Vestavia Hills High School in Birmingham, AL, traveled to Washington, D.C. to take part in the national finals of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution national competition. This competition is an extensive educational program developed specifically to educate young people about the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights.

More than 1,200 students from across the country participated in a 3-day academic competition. They participated in a simulated congressional hearing in which they "testified" before a panel. Students got to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles. Additionally, they had the opportunity to evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and present day issues.

Prior to their trip to Washington, these outstanding students from Vestavia Hills High School proved their knowledge of the United States Constitution, by winning their state-wide competition, thus earning them the chance to come to our Nation's capital to compete at the national level. I am proud these students represented the State of Alabama on a national level in this year's We the People competition.

I would like to pay special tribute to the teacher of the class, Amy Maddox.

The students of Vestavia Hills High School participating in the We the People: The Citizens and the Constitution competition are the following: Matthew Barley, Katie Barzler, Maria Begamaz, Michelle Blackburn, Brandon Demyan, Lorey Feagin, Anne Hackney, Ashley Holmes, Abby Jones, Staci Karpova, Thomas Lide, Kristin McDonald, Freman Meri-Glenn, Tucker Reeves, Luke Romano, Erin Snow, and Christopher Willoughby. I would like to applaud their efforts.

Mr. President, the achievements of these students are continued proof that the civic education initiative we approved in this chamber is paying dividends. We the People, which is part of the civic education initiative of the No Child Left Behind legislation, is giving students the lifelong skills they need to be effective, engaged, and informed citizens. I commend the Center for Civic Education and the National Conference of State Legislatures for their leadership in sponsoring this excellent service learning-type program. I also would like to commend Janice Cowin, the state coordinator from the Alabama Center for Law & Civic Education for her work in administering the program in my State.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:22 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2361. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2361. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1084. A bill to eliminate child poverty, and for other purposes.

S. 1085. A bill to provide for paid sick leave to ensure that Americans can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated: