

degree in German studies in 1993 and a master's degree in German linguistics in 1998. Additionally, he was a Fulbright Scholar at Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, Germany, in 1993 and worked as an academic technology liaison at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

It is clear that Jamie Bishop touched many lives with his personality, his sense of humor, his numerous talents, his passion for teaching, and his love of scientific art. In fact, those who were close to him have said he talked about "changing the world with art." He has been described as an intelligent, artistic, caring, gentle, and polite individual.

It is difficult to fathom how something like this could happen, and words can't fully describe the grief we all feel as the weight of this tragedy settles over our Nation. My prayer is that, through faith and resolve, our country will emerge from this disaster in unity and strength as together we find healing from this sorrow.

Julianne and I will keep his wife Stefanie Hofer, who is a member of the Virginia Tech faculty, as well as his parents Michael and Jerri Bishop in our thoughts and prayers during this time of sorrow.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS JOSEPH ADAM
MCSWEEN

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I wish to honor U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Joseph Adam McSween of Oak Harbor, WA.

Petty Officer McSween will be remembered as a loving husband and father, a dedicated friend and sailor, and a strong leader. After graduating from Georgia Christian High School, he received a track scholarship to York College in York, NE, where he would later graduate in 2001 with an associate degree. While there, Petty Officer McSween was recognized as a natural leader and participated in campus leadership activities. He also met and fell in love with his wife Erin Hammitt while they were students together. They later had two daughters: Lily, age 5, and Gwyneth, age 2.

On April 6, 2007, while serving near Kirkuk, Iraq, as a demolition specialist with the Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit 11, based at Whidbey Island, WA, Petty Officer McSween and two others passed away when a rocket hit their humvee. McSween was 26 years old. He was awarded the Bronze Star "V", Combat Distinguished Device, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Ribbon at his military service.

Adam was not a Nebraska resident, but he chose to be buried in York, NE. His very close friend, Petty Officer Randy Leppell, U.S. Navy, had this to say at the funeral: "One thing I remember about Adam, one story he told was that he called back to some crazy little town called York, Nebraska, which I'd never heard of, and he told

me he hadn't been to the school for a while. But the admissions officer still remembered his name. He said, 'This is Adam.' The Admissions Officer said 'Adam McSween?' He couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. I think it speaks volumes for the people of York."

Hundreds of people from York and many other areas of Nebraska and surrounding States, people who never even knew a young college student named Adam McSween, came to his funeral and lined the streets, proudly displaying the American Flag as the procession made its way to Adam's final resting place in Greenwood Cemetery in York, NE.

In addition to his wife and two daughters, Petty Officer McSween is survived by his parents Bob and Florence McSween; his two brothers Robert and Kyle; and his sister Angela. I offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Petty Officer McSween. He made the ultimate and most courageous sacrifice for our Nation. I join all Americans in grieving the loss of this remarkable young man and know that Petty Officer McSween's passion for serving, his leadership, and his selflessness will remain a source of inspiration for us all.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Brady law requires prospective gun purchasers to undergo a criminal background check before they are able to obtain a firearm from a federally licensed firearm dealer. It was created to prevent felons, fugitives, domestic abusers, and other prohibited persons from gaining access to guns. However, there are significant holes in this legislation that permit exploitation by those who wish to avoid criminal background checks and still obtain guns.

In 1993, President Clinton signed the Brady bill into law. This law required a waiting period for handgun sales until records were available to instantly check criminal background of prospective gun purchasers. Once the National Instant Check System, NICS, became operational in 1998, the Justice Department maintained background check records on approved purchases for 6 months in order to ensure that felons and other prohibited buyers were not mistakenly approved. In 2001, the Justice Department shortened this record retention period to 90 days, the actual amount of time it takes to ensure proper audits of NICS.

Under the Bush administration, however, Attorney General John Ashcroft sought to require the records of approved purchasers to be destroyed within 24 hours. In July 2002, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, issued a report on the potential effects of next-day destruction of NICS background check records. It concluded that destroying these records within 24 hours would prevent the Government from auditing the NICS system to en-

sure its accuracy and "would have public safety implications." The GAO warned that a corrupt dealer could provide the FBI with a different name than that of the actual buyer to obtain approval for the name of the false purchaser and then proceed with the sale to the actual prohibited buyer. Such a scheme would be nearly impossible to detect with background check records destroyed before the ATF could audit the dealer. Citing his concern about the privacy of gun owners, Attorney General Ashcroft ignored the GAO report and the 24-hour record-destruction provision went into effect.

Another loophole in the law is that it applies only to sales by licensed gun dealers, not to private transfers between unlicensed persons. Approximately 40 percent of gun sales are between private persons, such as at gun shows. Only six States require background checks on all firearm sales. According to the ATF, almost one-third of trafficked guns are acquired at gun shows and flea markets. These gatherings present the perfect opportunity for unlicensed sellers to offer countless guns for sale with no questions asked. People who would not pass a background check in a licensed gun store are able to purchase as many guns as they wish at gun shows.

Between the enactment in 1993 and 2005, the Brady Act has prevented approximately 1.4 million convicted felons and other prohibited persons from buying guns from licensed retail dealers. Without NICS records, law enforcement officers do not have the opportunity to retrieve a mistakenly sold gun in order to protect against its use in a crime. I urge my colleagues to pass commonsense gun regulations which would put an end to these gaping holes in our gun laws.

THE STATE OF SMALL BUSINESS MANUFACTURING

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I commemorate National Small Business Week, which President Bush designated for April 22-28, 2007. As ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have made it one of my top priorities to champion our Nation's small businesses and manufacturers and promote their needs and concerns. Our top job creators deserve nothing less. The fact is, small businesses are the driving force behind our Nation's economic growth, creating nearly three-quarters of all net new jobs and employing nearly 51 percent of the private sector workforce. It is essential that we in Congress continue to support small businesses ability to grow and expand so our economy can accelerate forward and create more jobs.

I can tell you, there is no higher priority for me than bolstering the state of our Nation's small manufacturers. In Maine, more than 20,700 manufacturing jobs disappeared between August 2000 and August 2006. We here in