

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

 NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS
MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today marks the 26th year that peace officers from around the country have gathered in the Nation's Capital to participate in the National Peace Officers Memorial Day Service. Every year, Peace Officers Memorial Day offers the people of the United States, in their communities, in their State capitals, and in the Nation's Capital, the opportunity to honor and reflect on the extraordinary service and sacrifice given year after year by our police forces. I welcome the visiting peace officers and their family members who are gathered in Washington today as we honor their services and those lost this past year.

Earlier this month, the Senate passed a resolution marking today National Peace Officers Memorial Day. This is now the 11th year running that I have sponsored this resolution to honor the sacrifice and commitment of those law enforcement officers who give their lives serving their communities. Senator SPECTER, himself a former prosecutor, former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and now our ranking member, was the lead Republican sponsor of this bipartisan measure this year. I thank the majority leader, himself a former police officer, and all Senators for their support in recognizing the sacrifices that law enforcement officers make each day for the American people.

Currently, more than 900,000 men and women who guard our communities do so at great risk. After the hijacked planes hit the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, 72 peace officers died while trying to ensure that their fellow citizens in those buildings got to safety. That act of terrorism resulted in the highest number of peace officers ever killed in a single incident in the history of our country and is a tragic reminder of how important it is for the Congress to provide all of the resources necessary to protect officers in the line of duty.

Since the first recorded police death in 1792, there have been more than 17,900 law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. We are fortunate in Vermont that we rank as the State with the fewest officer deaths. With 19 deaths, however, that is, of course, 19 deaths too many.

In 2006, 145 law enforcement officers died while serving in the line of duty, below the decade-long average of 165 deaths annually and a drop from 2005 when 156 officers were killed. That is still 145 officers too many. We need to

continue our support for better equipment and the increased use of bullet-resistant vests, improved training, and advanced emergency medical care. I hope as the 110th Congress moves forward that all Senators can work together to ensure that all of our law enforcement officers and their families have the full support and the resources they need from the Federal Government.

I have been working to help make it safer on the beat for our officers. Back in 1998, Senator Campbell and I authored the Bulletproof Vest Grant Partnership Act, in part a response to the tragic Carl Drega shootout on the Vermont-New Hampshire border in which two State troopers who lacked bulletproof vests were killed. Since then, we have successfully reauthorized this program three times: In the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 2000, in the State Justice Institute Reauthorization Act of 2004, and most recently as part of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005. It is now authorized at \$50 million per year through fiscal year 2009 to help State, tribal, and local jurisdictions purchase armor vests for use by law enforcement officers. Senator SPECTER and I joined together to send a letter to other Senators last week to make sure that the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program is fully funded this year. Bulletproof vests have saved the lives of thousands of officers and are a fundamental line of defense that no officer should be without. It is crucial that Congress provide the full funding authorized to the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program. Hundreds of thousands of police officers and local jurisdictions are counting on us.

I am disappointed that not all of Congress's actions to protect and help our law enforcement officers are implemented by this administration. President Bush has repeatedly proposed drastic cuts to the bulletproof vest initiative and other grant programs that directly assist State and local law enforcement. The Bush administration has spent more than \$400 billion on a failed policy in Iraq, and yet the President continues to propose cuts in funding for programs here in the United States for first responders who protect our Nation's communities.

I will mention one other important example of a law I sponsored and helped pass in 2003, the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefit Act. This important, bipartisan legislation reflects the belief of Congress that the families of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and other first responders should be cared for when a public safety officer dies of a heart attack or stroke in the line of duty. To date, the Department of Justice has made only two positive determinations from the more than 230 applications it has received. It is inexcusable that the Department of Justice appears to be interpreting this law as narrowly as possible and is denying and

delaying so many of these claims. Congress and the American people want to see fair and equitable treatment for the families of the brave individuals who lose their lives in the line of duty, not foot-dragging and excuses from the Justice Department.

We can all agree that the men and women in law enforcement who have sacrificed for our safety deserve our deep gratitude and respect. National Peace Officers Memorial Day recognizes real-life heroes. Our Nation's law enforcement officers deserve our commitment to provide for those who help keep us all safe. I support and respect our State and local police officers and all of our first responders and am proud to recognize their role in upholding the rule of law and keeping our Nation safe and secure.

 FEDERAL CRACK COCAINE
SENTENCING POLICY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the U.S. Sentencing Commission took another important step in addressing the wide disparity in our Federal cocaine sentencing laws.

The Commission released its fourth report to Congress in 12 years that, once again, provides a comprehensive review of our cocaine policies, and recommendations about how those policies can be improved. Almost 3 weeks ago, the Commission recommended to Congress a change in the Sentencing Guidelines that would lower the offense level for crack offenders across the board. Both of these actions are positive steps, but real progress in this area requires congressional action.

Under current law, an offender apprehended with 5 grams of crack cocaine faces the same 5 year mandatory minimum sentence as an offender with 500 grams of powder cocaine—that is the same sentence for 100 times more powder cocaine. In 2000, the average sentence for a crack cocaine defendant was nearly 4 years longer than the average sentence for a powder cocaine defendant.

Last week, the Commission announced it will issue a guideline change that lowers the offense level for crack offenders by 2 points across the board. As a result, 75 percent of Federal crack offenders will have their sentences reduced by approximately 16 months. This change represents a step in the right direction.

For far too long, the Federal crack-powder sentencing laws have created an injustice in our Nation. Over 20 years now, Congress has silently stood by as this policy swelled our prisons, disproportionately impacted African Americans, and misdirected precious Federal resources on low-level street dealers rather than on the worst offenders—drug kingpins who bring crack into our neighborhoods. Twenty years of irresponsible policy is enough.

I hope the Commission's report and recommendations will serve as a roadmap for the 110th Congress. Americans

deserve a Congress that will make Federal drug laws fair and proportional. We can, and should, fix this injustice on a bipartisan basis. It is time to act.

HONORING THE LATE SENATOR THOMAS J. DODD

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Thomas J. Dodd, the former Senator of the great State of Connecticut. As his son, my senior Senator, CHRIS DODD, said earlier, Thomas Dodd would have turned 100 years old today. He was a public servant of the highest order, working in an astounding number of capacities throughout his life. After graduating from Yale Law School, he became a special agent with the FBI, and eventually became an assistant for five Attorney Generals of the United States. In this capacity, Thomas Dodd played a key role in establishing the first civil rights division of the Justice Department.

Upon leaving the Justice Department, Senator Dodd became the U.S. chief counsel to prosecute Axis crimes at Nuremberg and handled the day-to-day strategies for our Nation's prosecution team. In recognition of his work, Senator Dodd received a Presidential Citation, the U.S. Medal of Freedom, and the Czechoslovakian Order of the White Lion.

I admire Senator Dodd for his bravery at Nuremberg. It was not an easy job. He spent over a year away from his family, but he did it because he believed the United States had a responsibility to show the world its resounding dedication to a fair legal process and the delivery of justice to the Nazi war criminals.

Senator Dodd's political career began in 1952 when he was elected from the First District of Connecticut in the House of Representatives. He won election to the Senate in 1958, serving as a leader on the Foreign Relations Committee throughout his tenure. Senator Dodd wholeheartedly opposed Soviet communism, and often stood as a maverick within the Democratic Party on foreign policy.

Thomas Dodd was an inspiration to me. He was a brilliant orator, and I would often find my way to see him speak when he would visit the New Haven area. He was a man who stood by his principles, oftentimes in the face of fierce opposition. Partisanship and politics always took a backseat to doing what was in the best interest of America.

Thomas Dodd never refrained from asking the tough questions, and I applaud him for his independence and the example he set as a distinguished Senator from my home State of Connecticut, a proud legacy of public service, which his son CHRIS has carried on.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING MURIEL GIBSON

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Muriel Gibson for her 19 years of service to the U.S. Senate and the people of Washington State. Ms. Gibson has been a case-worker on my staff since I was first elected to the Senate in 1993, and she is leaving at the end of this week to continue her public service in another capacity.

Ms. Gibson has spent the last 15 years on my staff and 4 years on Senator Brock Adams's staff serving Washington State's veterans and members of the armed services. She has been a tireless advocate for the men and women of our State who served us through military service. As a country, we promise our servicemembers and their families support in exchange for their commitment to protect our Nation. Ms. Gibson has made sure that these promises are kept to these brave men and women.

The needs of our veterans and soldiers can often be demanding, and Ms. Gibson met those demands with compassion and understanding. As the daughter of a career soldier, she knows the challenges facing our military families firsthand. Whether assisting a World War II veteran to receive his long delayed Purple Heart or ensuring that a returning soldier from Operation Iraqi Freedom gets the medical care needed, Ms. Gibson saw to it that everyone who approached my office for assistance received the guidance and attention they deserved.

I am also pleased to say that her service to our Nation's veterans will not end when she leaves my office. She will be working toward a master's degree in social work and hopes to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs upon completion of her degree. I am comforted by the knowledge that a new generation of veterans will gain from her experience and dedication in the years to come.

I would like to thank Ms. Gibson for her years of distinguished service to the Senate, and I wish her happiness in her future pursuits. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The following message from the President of the United States was transmitted to the Senate by one of his secretaries:

REPORT CERTIFYING THAT THE EXPORT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA OF CERTAIN MATERIALS, INCLUDING AN ISOSTATIC PRESS FOR MANUFACTURING AUTOMOTIVE SPARE PARTS, IS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO THE U.S. SPACE LAUNCH INDUSTRY AND THAT THE MATERIAL WILL NOT MEASURABLY IMPROVE THE MISSILE OR SPACE LAUNCH CAPABILITIES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—PM 13

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105-261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China:

A four-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for China's water purification and treatment industries;

A computer control system upgrade to a three-axis filament winding machine for production of spare parts for China's water purification and treatment industries;

An isostatic press for manufacturing automotive spare parts; and

A four-axis filament winding machine to be used in production of graphite or glass composite golf clubs.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, May 15, 2007.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1124. An act to extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999.

H.R. 1260. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6301 Highway 58 in Harrison, Tennessee, as the "Claude Ramsey Post Office".

H.R. 1335. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 508 East Main Street in Seneca, South Carolina, as the "S/Sgt Lewis G. Watkins Post Office Building".