

Force National Guard as they continue their critical role in our warfighting efforts. And it includes the badly needed Wounded Warrior legislation that will address the broader issues of patient care which we saw manifested at Walter Reed.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am committed to seeing this bill pass the floor of the Senate. It would be a complete failure of leadership on our part if we failed to pass this vital measure while our men and women are engaged in conflict. Unfortunately, this bill has been bogged down by politically motivated Iraq votes the Senate has taken many times before. Again, I understand the legitimate differences of opinion others may have on our strategy in Iraq, but it demonstrates a lack of seriousness about the enemy we face and the needs of our men and women in uniform to be here after 14 days of debate and not to have passed this critical legislation, particularly as we come up against the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

It is time to put the politics aside. It is time to put aside the nondefense related amendments. Every day, our men and women in uniform are out there making us proud with their courage and dedication to their mission. We should be here doing our job making sure we are supporting them by passing this critical legislation.

There are some legitimate amendments related to the underlying bill that we have debated at length, but there are also a lot of amendments that are unrelated to the underlying bill. Switching gears and moving to hate crimes legislation or to restart the immigration debate on the Defense authorization bill, in my view, would be a mistake. It would demonstrate a lack of leadership and a lack of good judgment on our part when we have men and women in the field who are fighting every single day. We need to make sure we get them a Defense authorization bill that gives them the pay raise they deserve, that addresses the equipment needs they have, that deals with the Wounded Warrior legislation, and that cares for our veterans when they come back from that conflict. There are so many important things in this underlying bill that we need to deal with, and we need to deal with them in a timely way.

I would hope that as the debate gets underway again tomorrow, we will be able to come to some final conclusion about this bill and get it passed into law without having to get bogged down in what are ancillary and unrelated issues, many of which are now, at this late juncture, being brought forward.

I urge my colleagues on both sides to do what is in the national interest, the right thing for our men and women in uniform; that is, to pass a Defense authorization bill that addresses their fundamental needs to make sure they have the funding and support, training and equipment they need to do their jobs and complete their mission.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SCHIP

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about an issue we have debated for many months on the floor of the Senate. It has been debated in the other body, and it has been debated a lot of places across the country. The issue is children's health insurance.

We have a vehicle in place to make sure that not only do the 6.5 million children who are covered already under the program maintain their coverage all across the country, but in particular with this legislation, this bipartisan legislation, the Senate bill, which a couple of weeks ago we saw got 68 votes—the Presiding Officer and others in this body know it is hard to get 68 votes on anything, especially something as significant as children's health insurance. But that was a resounding vote in favor of a policy which will make sure we cover those 6.5 million children but add substantially to that to the point where this legislation would allow us to make sure 10 million American children have health insurance. We have a vehicle. We have a program that works. We have bipartisan consensus from across the board, even beyond parties. We have people who don't agree on much in legislation over the course of a year or two agreeing on this. There is strong support across America for it, certainly in my State of Pennsylvania, certainly in the State of New Jersey. But all across America we see support from virtually every corner.

There is only one problem. Despite the bipartisan consensus which exists here and in the other body, the President has threatened and seems determined to veto this legislation. For the life of me, I can't understand that. I can't understand why the President would say that he supports reauthorizing the program, that he thinks the program is good and it works, but he will not support a bipartisan consensus. This makes no sense, especially since States across America have had this kind of insurance in place for many years. In Pennsylvania, we have about 160,000 children covered right now, maybe a little more. We could increase that substantially over the next 5 years to add another 140,000 or more. So instead of having 160,000 kids covered, we get 300,000 children in Pennsylvania covered.

We know this doesn't end the discussion. We know there will still be children who won't be covered. Even if we get to that 10 million number, we know there will be millions of children,

maybe as many as 5 million, who are not covered. So we can't rest just on the foundation of this legislation.

I plead with the President, don't veto legislation that will provide 10 million American children with the health care they should have, the health care their parents and their communities have a right to expect but also the health care for children in the dawn of their lives which, beyond what it does for that child, which is obvious, I think there is a strong moral argument, but even beyond that argument, what this will do for the American economy years into the future.

These children, if they get the kind of health care and early learning we all support, will do better in school. They will achieve more. They will learn more. And if they learn more, they can earn more. We know there are CEOs across the country who understand this investment in our children is an investment in our economic future.

I join a lot of people in this Chamber in both parties who worked very hard to get 68 votes for this legislation. There was a lot of tough negotiating in the Senate Finance Committee, where the vote, I think, was 17 to 4 way back in the summer. There is the work that has been done in the House and the work that has been done between both bodies to get this right.

I ask anyone who has an interest in this legislation across the country—or anywhere someone is following this issue—to urge the President not to veto children's health insurance that will cover 10 million American children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 3047

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 1585, that the amendments to the substitute be laid aside, and the Senate proceed to the Hatch amendment No. 3047; that the cloture motion at the desk on the amendment be considered as having been filed and reported, and the Senate then resume the regular order regarding the bill, and then return to morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3047) is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3047

(Purpose: To require comprehensive study and support for criminal investigations and prosecutions by State and local law enforcement officials)

At the appropriate place in the substitute add the following:

SEC. —. COMPREHENSIVE STUDY AND SUPPORT FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS BY STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.

(a) STUDIES.—

(1) COLLECTION OF DATA.—

(A) DEFINITION OF RELEVANT OFFENSE.—In this paragraph, the term “relevant offense” means a crime described in subsection (b)(1) of the first section of Public Law 101–275 (28 U.S.C. 534 note) and a crime that manifests evidence of prejudice based on gender or age.

(B) COLLECTION FROM CROSS-SECTION OF STATES.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States, in consultation with the National Governors’ Association, shall, if possible, select 10 jurisdictions with laws classifying certain types of offenses as relevant offenses and 10 jurisdictions without such laws from which to collect the data described in subparagraph (C) over a 12-month period.

(C) DATA TO BE COLLECTED.—The data described in this paragraph are—

(i) the number of relevant offenses that are reported and investigated in the jurisdiction;

(ii) the percentage of relevant offenses that are prosecuted and the percentage that result in conviction;

(iii) the duration of the sentences imposed for crimes classified as relevant offenses in the jurisdiction, compared with the length of sentences imposed for similar crimes committed in jurisdictions with no laws relating to relevant offenses; and

(iv) references to and descriptions of the laws under which the offenders were punished.

(D) COSTS.—Participating jurisdictions shall be reimbursed for the reasonable and necessary costs of compiling data collected under this paragraph.

(2) STUDY OF RELEVANT OFFENSE ACTIVITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete a study and submit to Congress a report that analyzes the data collected under paragraph (1) and under section 534 of title 28, United States Code, to determine the extent of relevant offense activity throughout the United States and the success of State and local officials in combating that activity.

(B) IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS.—In the study conducted under subparagraph (A), the Comptroller General of the United States shall identify any trends in the commission of relevant offenses specifically by—

(i) geographic region;

(ii) type of crime committed; and

(iii) the number and percentage of relevant offenses that are prosecuted and the number for which convictions are obtained.

(b) ASSISTANCE OTHER THAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—At the request of a law enforcement official of a State or a political subdivision of a State, the Attorney General, acting through the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and in cases where the Attorney General determines special circumstances exist, may provide technical, forensic, prosecutorial, or any other assistance in the criminal investigation or prosecution of any crime that—

(1) constitutes a crime of violence (as defined in section 16 of title 18, United States Code);

(2) constitutes a felony under the laws of the State; and

(3) is motivated by animus against the victim by reason of the membership of the victim in a particular class or group.

(c) GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may, in cases where the Attorney General determines special circumstances exist, make grants to States and local subdivisions of States to assist those entities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes motivated by animus against the victim by reason of the membership of the victim in a particular class or group.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—A State or political subdivision of a State applying for assistance under this subsection shall—

(A) describe the purposes for which the grant is needed; and

(B) certify that the State or political subdivision lacks the resources necessary to investigate or prosecute a crime motivated by animus against the victim by reason of the membership of the victim in a particular class or group.

(3) DEADLINE.—An application for a grant under this subsection shall be approved or disapproved by the Attorney General not later than 10 days after the application is submitted.

(4) GRANT AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection shall not exceed \$100,000 for any single case.

(5) REPORT AND AUDIT.—Not later than December 31, 2008, the Attorney General, in consultation with the National Governors’ Association, shall—

(A) submit to Congress a report describing the applications made for grants under this subsection, the award of such grants, and the effectiveness of the grant funds awarded; and

(B) conduct an audit of the grants awarded under this subsection to ensure that such grants are used for the purposes provided in this subsection.

(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to carry out this section.

CLOTURE MOTION

The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII is as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the pending Hatch amendment No. 3047 relating to hate crimes to Calendar No. 189, H.R. 1585, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin Hatch, Pete Domenici, John Barrasso, Trent Lott, Tom Coburn, Jon Kyl, Mike Crapo, Judd Gregg, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Johnny Isakson, John Thune, Lindsey Graham, Wayne Allard, C.S. Bond, Bob Bennett, Michael B. Enzi.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the amendment that I have filed to H.R. 1545, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2008. My amendment expresses the sense of Congress that an appropriate site be established within the Arlington National Cemetery for a small memorial to the memory of the 40 members of the U.S. Armed Forces who perished in an airplane crash at Bakers Creek, Australia, on June 14, 1943. A similar provision is already included in the House version of the fiscal year 2008 DOD authorization bill, and so it is im-

portant for the Senate to declare its support for this worthy cause.

On June 14, 1943, a B-17C Flying Fortress aircraft was transporting a group of U.S. servicemen from the city of Mackay in Queensland, Australia. The 35 servicemen, accompanied by six crew members, were returning to the jungle battlefields of New Guinea to continue their brave fight against the enemy Japanese forces. They had spent approximately 10 days in Mackay enjoying a much needed break at American Red Cross rest and recreation facilities, whose location in Australia was not widely known at the time. The aircraft lifted off into a fog and, 5 minutes after takeoff, crashed 5 miles south at Bakers Creek, killing everyone on board except for a sole survivor.

To this day, the cause of the crash remains a mystery. History books, to a certain extent, have obscured this event even though it remains the deadliest plane crash in Australian history. There is a reason for that. The press was not allowed to report the crash when it occurred—owing to wartime censorship laws. The relatives of those who perished received telegrams from the U.S. War Department only stating that their loved ones had been killed somewhere in the South West Pacific. Secrecy shrouded this plane crash because the U.S. military was not eager to either tip off nearby Japanese forces on the presence of U.S. troops in Australia or feed enemy propaganda. For that reason, this plane crash that has proved to be the worst single airplane crash in the South West Pacific theater during World War II—remained an official secret for 15 years after the end of the war.

The amendment before the Senate today would seek to provide a lasting tribute to the bravery and dedication of these young American men. It would establish the sense of the Congress that a permanent memorial, modest in size and nature, should be located at an appropriate place in Arlington National Cemetery. For too long, the truth on how these young men died in the service of their Nation has been hidden away—albeit for understandable reasons. Next June 14, 2008 will mark the 65th anniversary of the forgotten tragedy. Now is the time to mark their sacrifices with the proper level of respect and reverence.

The memorial to honor the lives and sacrifice of these 40 American heroes has already been constructed, yet it lies on foreign soil. The memorial, built by Codori Memorials of Gettysburg, PA, today stands on the grounds of the Australian Embassy here in our Nation’s Capital. It is a very small memorial—5 feet 2 inches high and 4 feet wide at the base, occupying only 5½ square feet of land. We thank Ambassador Dennis Richardson and the Government of Australia for so graciously hosting this memorial; we are reminded of the long-standing alliance between our two great nations. Yet it is time for the official memorial to

these American heroes to come home, to be welcomed at Arlington National Cemetery where it can take its rightful place among our fallen heroes.

Each of the 40 Americans who perished in this crash is a true hero who gave their lives to the cause of our Nation. To date, the Bakers Creek Memorial Association has located the families of 38 of the 40 casualties. They continue to search for relatives of the remaining two soldiers to notify them of the specifics surrounding their loved one's deaths.

I wish to claim prerogative on behalf of my home State to take note of the six Pennsylvanians killed in this tragic crash. Each of their families still resides in Pennsylvania. Their names and hometowns are as follows: PFC James E. Finney, Erie, PA; TSGT Alfred H. Frezza, Altoona, PA; SGT Donald B. Kyper, Hesston, PA; PFC Frank S. Penksa, Moscow, PA; PFC Anthony Rudnick, Haddon Heights, PA; CPL Raymond H. Smith, Oil City, PA.

I am joined in this effort by Senator SPECTER. It is time to do right by these forgotten American heroes and give them and their families a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery that is worthy of their valor, worthy of their honor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to morning business.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of the 14th annual National Public Lands Day, which will be celebrated on Saturday, September 29. I am pleased to acknowledge the efforts of volunteers around the Nation who will come together to improve and restore one of America's most valuable assets, our public lands.

National Public Lands Day has fostered communities of volunteers around the Nation. When it started in 1994, there were 700 volunteers working in only a few areas. This year nearly 110,000 volunteers will work at more than 1,300 locations to protect public land for the enjoyment of future generations. The spirit that guided the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1930s continues today in National Public Lands Day, our latest commitment to care for our country's natural resources.

Our Nation has a grand tradition of conservation. When Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, it was the world's first national park. The idea of a national park was an American invention of historic proportions that led the way for global conservation efforts. One of the earliest and most energetic conservationists was President Teddy Roosevelt. He dedicated 194 million acres of national parks and national preserves, which set a lofty standard for all who follow.

Over one-third of America is public land. They are places of continuous discovery, where we go to find ourselves, to uncover our history, and to explore for new resources. We are not the only ones to visit our public lands: millions of tourists, many from overseas, enjoy our national parks every year.

Our public lands are part of who we are and their diversity reflects our identity. In many areas, they provide timber, ore, and forage that are the economic bedrock of rural America. In other areas, Congress has designated them as wilderness, places "untrammelled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain."

I want to recognize the thousands of Federal employees who manage these lands year-round. The Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and other Federal land management agencies ensure that public lands in Nevada meet the changing needs of our communities. They provide a vital, though rarely reported, service to our Nation, managing our public lands for our children and grandchildren.

National Public Lands Day encourages volunteers to join in that service. Across Nevada, at places like the Black Rock Desert, Lake Mead, Boundary Peak, Sloan Canyon and the Truckee River, volunteers will work to improve our public lands. This year's focus is the defense of native species from invasive weeds. Noxious weeds are a serious problem that has plagued the West for years. Exotic weeds push out native plants and provide plenty of fuel for wildfires. In Nevada, we know about this threat all too well. National Public Lands Day volunteers in Elko, NV, will help to repair the damage from last year's record-setting fire season.

The preservation of our public lands is a priority for me. Our public lands are part of what makes the United States a great Nation. I voice my gratitude to all who will participate in National Public Lands Day this year.

CORRECTION FOR THE RECORD

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I wish to correct a press release issued by my office on August 2, 2007. In this release, we correctly quoted Senator BAUCUS during the SCHIP debate when he stated, "We're the only country in the industrialized world that does not have universal coverage. I think the Children's Health Insurance Program is another step to move toward universal coverage."

Due to a misplaced quotation mark in the release, the following statement I made on the floor was included in the same quotation attributed to Senator BAUCUS: "Everyone realizes that the goal of this legislation moves us a giant step further down the road to nationalizing healthcare, which would result in a drop in quality and in rationing." Although this is an accurate quote, it should have been attributed to me and not Senator BAUCUS, and I

apologize for any confusion that our press release may have created.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED NATIONS

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the United Nations General Assembly. Today, as President Bush prepares to speak before the United Nations General Assembly, we are reminded both of the great potential of American leadership to enhance global security and prosperity and, tragically, of how much ground we have lost in recent years in fulfilling that potential. That ground can only be regained with new, bold, and visionary American leadership that acknowledges past mistakes, embodies and embraces change, and unifies our country to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

America has surmounted far greater hurdles before, renewing itself and leading the world towards shared security and common progress. That is the story of the founding of the United Nations. Its original architect, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, died weeks before the U.N.'s inaugural meeting in San Francisco. Roosevelt never had the opportunity to address the U.N. General Assembly, but his legacy speaks volumes. As American power reached new heights and Allied forces swept across Europe and the Pacific islands to free the world from tyranny, Roosevelt laid the foundations for a new era of collective security by creating a new institution that aimed to guarantee the peace and protect the basic rights of all human beings.

Stalin's obstruction created stalemate in the United Nations, but the United States was not deterred. American presidents created new institutions, like NATO, and encouraged others, including the European Economic Community, to advance the principles and mandate of the U.N. Charter. In the decades that followed, the United States led and listened, gained by being generous, and ultimately prevailed in the struggle with totalitarianism.

Today, it is fashionable in some circles to bash the United Nations. This is all too easy to do, but it is also shortsighted and self-defeating. The United Nations is, we should recall, an American creation. It is also a commonsense vehicle to share global burdens and costs. Despite its evident flaws and failings, the U.N. remains essential to advancing U.S. interests, enhancing global security, spurring development, and providing food, medicine, and life-saving assistance to the world's most needy every day.

The U.N.'s work in development addresses the dire needs of 1 billion people living in extreme poverty. It is the U.N., funded in part by the generosity of America's taxpayers, that prepares and monitors elections in more than 30 countries and assists fragile new democracies. It is the U.N., funded in