

also found several tons of military grade weapons and IED-making material and detained over 1,500 insurgents. Altogether, they overcame numerous challenges, and through courage and dedication, they succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. They have much to be proud of.

On February 27, 2008, the city of El Paso will hold a parade to honor the brave men and women of the 4-1 Cavalry. Our Nation is a better place because of their service and sacrifice on behalf of a noble cause. We can never forget them or their family members. We honor their struggles and successes in that mission.

It is with sincere gratitude that I recognize them today.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate National Peace Corps Week and to honor more than 190,000 Peace Corps Volunteers from both my home State of New Mexico and across the Nation. Each year these courageous men and women embark on a 2 year journey to help develop the societies of 139 countries around the world.

Almost 47 years ago, then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by peaceably living and working to develop another country. Over the years, volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world by educating people on basic health issues, performing youth outreach, developing businesses, and offering assistance to small farmers to increase food production.

Today, over 8,000 volunteers are serving in the communities of 74 countries. Many Peace Corps volunteers from New Mexico are currently posted in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Honduras. Volunteers range in age from 25 to 80, with varying levels of education including individuals with undergraduate and graduate degrees. Additionally, the Peace Corps offers programs that support academic studies once a term of service has concluded, which allows many volunteers to further their education after their self-sacrificing service.

The experience volunteers take back with them from their host countries helps shape the course of their lives. Lifelong connections and friendships span these gaps of distance, and volunteers have the satisfaction of not only a job well done, but also of the positive image they created for our Nation.

Throughout this week of celebration, I encourage Americans to ask themselves, "What can I do for my country?"

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

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

UNITED STATES ARMY'S RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

• Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am proud to recognize a truly successful program that, over the past decade, has made important contributions to improving quality of life for our soldiers and their families. Now entering its 10th year, the Residential Communities Initiative, or RCI, has brought together members of the private real estate community and the Army to build new family housing, and upgrade and modernize existing family housing, on flagship Army bases all across the country.

Back in 1996, the Army faced the enormous and costly challenge of replacing and renovating its aging and substandard family housing. Too many soldiers and their families were living in inadequate housing. According to the Army itself, roughly 70 percent of housing needed replacement or renovation at an estimated cost of \$7 billion. It was clear that action had to be taken, and in 1996, Congress established the framework for what would become the Residential Communities Initiative when it authorized the Military Housing Privatization Initiative.

Under the MHPI umbrella, the Residential Communities Initiative was presented in 1999 as one significant component of the Army's plan to address this challenge of overhauling inadequate family housing. Thanks in large part to the visionary leadership and hard work of my friends, Congressman CHET EDWARDS of Texas and then-Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Logistics and Environment Mahlon Apgar, RCI successfully navigated both the Pentagon bureaucracy and a maze of congressional committees to come to fruition.

Congressman EDWARDS's advocacy of RCI was particularly important and is just one example of his many successful efforts to improve quality of life for our troops and veterans. Congressman EDWARDS works on these critical issues as cochairman of both the House Army Caucus and the USO Congressional Caucus. Most recently, in 2007, as chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, Congressman EDWARDS authored the largest VA budget increase in the VA's 77-year history.

Indeed, both Congressman EDWARDS and Secretary Apgar should be proud of what their efforts have since spawned. RCI has made, or will be making, its way to 45 different Army installations all across the United States, from Fort Lewis in Washington State to Fort Hood in Texas to Fort Drum and Fort Hamilton in my home State of New York. At each of these bases, RCI has helped to provide our soldiers and their families with the kind of modern, quality housing choices that they deserve. In less than 10 years, more than 86,000 houses have been transferred to public-private partnerships under RCI, and thousands of Army families have already benefited from renovation and new construction completed under RCI.

This initiative has not only been good for our soldiers and their families but also for American taxpayers. In the last decade, more than \$10 billion of new private capital has been invested under the RCI program, compared with roughly \$1 billion in government equity. In other words, RCI has produced a ten-fold return on our public investment.

With so many of our brave servicemembers serving the Nation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world, it is our responsibility to ensure that they and their families have all of the support that they need and deserve here at home. This not only includes the best health care available but also modern, clean, and comfortable housing choices. I invite my fellow Senators from both sides of the aisle to join me in applauding the Residential Communities Initiative and its early champions, CHET EDWARDS and Mahlon Apgar, for doing so much to enhance quality of life for our Army families. •

HONORING FALLEN HEROES

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the sacrifice of our young men and women in the Armed Forces. Yesterday, I was fortunate enough to meet my friend, Albert Carey Caswell, a respected member of the Capitol Guide Service staff, in the Halls of the Capitol. He has written a poem in honor of Army SGT Jeff Mersman from my hometown of Parker, KS. Sergeant Mersman died in Afghanistan while on his fourth tour of duty with the 2nd Battalion, 503rd, Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. I ask to have printed in the RECORD Mr. Caswell's poem in memory of SGT Jeff Mersman and all those heroes like him who gave their lives so valiantly for our country.

We owe them a debt which can never be repaid.

The poem follows:

WHO WILL GO?

Who Will Go?
And who will live, and who will die? And not ask why! a Mother cries, as her sweet child has died. . . Who will go? A Mother cries!
Who will lead?
So that we all can so live in peace. Who will die, and who will bleed?
Who will go, so that we all can so succeed?
Who will serve?
Who will hear that call, that cry. . . those most solemn words?
Who will bring a better world? Who will go? Out into the face of hell, with but their magnificent flags unfurled!
So our children can awake. . .
In a better world, with but smiles in their hearts and souls. . . as their first steps they so take!
Who will go?
Who will leave, their loved ones behind so? With brothers and sisters in arms, together bonding into such an angelic glow. . .
Who will go?
Who will leave all that they so love?

Out there into the darkest of all evils, to so rise above!

Who will go?

Who will give up their fine young lives?

To Save The World, all in their most magnificent short lifetimes so unfurled?

Who will go?

All we have. . .

Are but moments in time!

In our short lives! To grab hearts, to Heaven rise. . . To Make A Difference. . . in all our short lives!

Who will give?

Give up their arms and legs, their bright eyes and faces so have all of they! And take up that charge?

To so make our world, a better place to live? Who will go?

What families shall live?

With such heartache, because to this country their fine sons and daughters lives did so give!

Who will cry? And who will go?

Who up to Heaven shall so rise?

All of those fine patriots, whom have so died. . . and all of those loving mother's now with tears in eyes!

And all of those fine families, All of these, and all of those!

To Heaven, They Will Go! They will go!

Amen!•

IDAHO TEENS RAISE AWARENESS OF DATING VIOLENCE

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, during the first full week of February this year, we recognized the third annual National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week. In addition to the U.S. Senate, close to 50 national, State, and local agencies and organizations and many Governors also participated in the awareness efforts this year. Domestic violence and legal advocates, education and child advocacy organizations, public officials and law enforcement have joined this nationwide effort to raise awareness of teen dating violence. I am pleased to report that Idaho students, under the guidance of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, are among the Nation's leaders in this campaign. Members of the Idaho Teen Advisory Council, a coalition of Idaho teens from cities and towns statewide, have volunteered to be the first voices speaking out against dating violence and emotional abuse in their respective communities and schools.

As we look back on another successful Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week, I would like to call public attention to the following Idaho students who work to promote healthy relationships among their peers not just during the awareness week but all year long:

Sarah Marie Grigg from Pinehurst; Katherine Kilbourne from Osburn; Tiffany Delphous from Elk River; James Walker from Orofino; Benjamin Allen from Kooskia; Kyle Conger from Kooskia; Samantha Larsen from Weiser; Megan Keller from Kuna; Kelsey Eldridge from Boise; Katie Seale from Boise; Christi Avery from Boise; Challis Lewis from Jerome; Bronwen Kate Raff from Hailey; Erika Ramirez from American Falls; Monique Betty from Pocatello; Natalie Milligan from Idaho Falls; Jordyn Bochenek

from Rexburg; Jaden Cook from Rexburg/Madison High, and Haley Nord from Caldwell.

I proudly and publicly honor these students today for their selfless and committed contribution to reducing teen dating violence and emotional abuse in Idaho.●

LEAP YEAR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Anthony, NM, today for being the Leap Year Capital of the World. A leap year only occurs once every 4 years, and is something to be celebrated. Anthony has taken this unique day and made it a staple celebration for their community.

Twenty years ago in Anthony, two neighbors who shared a common birthday, February 29, decided they should find other people with the same unique situation and have a giant birthday party; after all, it only happens once every 4 years. Mary Ann Brown and Birdie Lewis created the Worldwide Leap Year Birthday Club which now has almost 500 members. Because of the popularity of the birthday club, they have also created the Worldwide Leap Year Anniversary Club for couples who celebrate their anniversaries on this special day.

The Anthony Chamber of Commerce has planned several events this year for those with leap year birthdays and anniversaries and also for those with birthdays on the other 365 days of the year. The Worldwide Leap Year Festival will be kicked off with a parade, and then those attending will enjoy a leap year birthday dinner complete with birthday cake. Also in attendance will be Josephine Concho Abeita, a true New Mexico native, born in 1908, 4 years before New Mexico was even a State. Ms. Abeita will celebrate her 100th birthday and her 25th actual leap year birthday. I want to commend the citizens of Anthony and the creative way they have designed to promote their city. I wish them much success for this year's celebration.●

TRIBUTE TO DIANE WOLF

• Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, sadly, I wish to pay tribute to Diane Wolf, who died January 10 at the age of 53. Diane was someone many of us in the Senate knew well. She was unabashed in her interest in government and worked tirelessly to improve the world in which we live. She was willing at all times to use her personal resources to make issues clearly understood and actively supported. She considered it an obligation of our democracy to express herself on the importance of matters under consideration by the Congress.

Diane served on countless committees ranging from the arts to government. In addition to her role as a benefactor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Diane Wolf was ac-

tive in the cultural atmosphere in our nation's Capital. There, she worked on the boards of trustees for the U.S. Senate Preservation Board, the Foundation for the National Archives, and the Washington National Opera, as well as holding board positions on the Library of Congress Madison Council, Smithsonian Council of American Art, and the Kennedy Center National Committee, among others. In 1985, she was appointed by President Reagan to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and Diane had an immediate impact in this new role. She worked to change the design on U.S. coins and allow creativity and American history to serve as the basis for their design. While her effort to revolutionize our coinage did not materialize, Diane displayed the tenacity and commitment that characterized everything she undertook.

Diane Wolf was blessed with a loving family who took pleasure in every aspect of her life and her interests. Though she was taken from them far too early in her life, memories of her being will be the greatest of family treasures. As we look to the future, let us pause and remember Diane Wolf, an outstanding, caring human being who dedicated her life to helping others. She will be missed by all who knew her.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, 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 and withdrawals which were referred to the appropriate committees.

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

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

S. 2663. A bill to reform the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide greater protection for children's products, to improve the screening of noncompliant consumer products, to improve the effectiveness of consumer product recall programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2664. A bill to extend the provisions of the Protect America Act of 2007.

S. 2665. A bill to extend the provisions of the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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