

since the beginning of 2008, an increase of about 100 percent over the previous year. This violence, which is mostly perpetrated by international drug trafficking organizations, impacts the well-being and safety of communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Recently it was reported that the entire police force in Palomas, a Mexican town just across the border from Columbus, New Mexico, resigned after repeated threats from drug traffickers. The Chief of Police fled to the United States to seek asylum. On another recent occasion, the Columbus Port of Entry was shut down after there were several killings nearby. As a result, American school children who commute back and forth over the border had to receive a police escort. And just yesterday, the Department of State renewed a travel advisory warning of the ongoing violence.

I have met with Mexico's Ambassador, Foreign Minister, and Attorney General to raise serious concerns about the level of violence in the region and to discuss ways to address this problem. I am pleased that the Government of Mexico understands the gravity of this situation and I appreciate Mexico's response in sending 2,000 troops to Chihuahua to bring it under control. However, both Mexican and U.S. law enforcement officials have stressed the need to more aggressively target the criminal enterprises that are supplying weapons to drug cartels. According to ATF, about 90 percent of the firearms recovered in Mexico are trafficked from the United States because high-powered weapons are much easier to purchase in the U.S. than in Mexico.

The drug cartels operating along the border smuggle illegal narcotics into the United States and use revenue derived from the drug trade to purchase the firearms they need to maintain control over drug trafficking routes. According to ATF, about 90 percent of the firearms recovered in Mexico originate from sources within the United States because high-powered weapons, such as M-50s, are much easier to purchase in the United States than in Mexico. The ability to fight drug traffickers is significantly hampered by the fact that these violent groups use smuggled weapons to assassinate military and police officials, murder rival members of drug organizations, and kill innocent civilians.

In order to reduce violence in the region and disrupt the drug trade, it is essential that we aggressively work to prevent drug trafficking organizations operating in Mexico from obtaining these weapons. This effort requires that additional resources be allocated to target weapons trafficking networks supplying these arms and enhanced international cooperation in tracing the sources of weapons seized in Mexico.

To this end, the legislation I am introducing today would authorize additional resources to expand a successful

ATF initiative, Project Gunrunner, which is aimed at combating arms smuggling. The bill would also increase the training and support of Mexican law enforcement in investigating firearms trafficking cases.

Specifically, the legislation would enable ATF to hire, train, and deploy an additional 80 special agents to establish and support seven more Project Gunrunner Teams that are solely devoted to disrupting firearm trafficking organizations smuggling weapons into Mexico. The bill also would make it possible for ATF to place at least 12 additional special agents in Mexico to support Mexican law enforcement in tracing seized firearms. Two Special Agents could be assigned to U.S. Consulates throughout the border region, Guadalajara, Chihuahua, Matamoros, Hermosillo, Tijuana, and Mazatlan, in conjunction with existing DEA offices. Funds would cover salaries, protective and investigative equipment, and other costs associated with maintaining a foreign presence. And lastly, the legislation would significantly increase ATF efforts to assist and train Mexican law enforcement officers with weapons trafficking investigations. The bill authorizes \$24.5 million for each fiscal year 2009 and 2010 to implement this Act.

I strongly believe that it is essential that the U.S. enhance its efforts to stop the flow of weapons being trafficked into Mexico, and I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 514—CONGRATULATING THE BOSTON COLLEGE MEN'S ICE HOCKEY TEAM ON WINNING THE 2008 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I NATIONAL ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. KERRY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 514

Whereas, on Saturday, April 12, 2008, the Boston College men's ice hockey team (referred to in this preamble as the "Eagles") won the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I National Ice Hockey Championship by defeating the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team by the score of 4 to 1 in the final game of the Frozen Four;

Whereas the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team deserves great respect for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history and then advancing to the National Championship game;

Whereas the victory for Boston College marked the Eagles' third national hockey championship, after the team's first championship win in 1949 and its second championship win in 2001;

Whereas the Eagles earned the number 1 seed in the NCAA hockey tournament with an impressive overall record of 24 wins, 11 losses, and 8 ties during the 2007-2008 season;

Whereas the Eagles were led by junior Nathan Gerbe, the Nation's leading scorer in

men's college ice hockey, who came in second for the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, with 35 goals and 32 assists during the season;

Whereas the Eagles have made the National Championship game in each of the past 3 years, demonstrating extraordinary teamwork and dedication;

Whereas the remarkable 2007-2008 season also included a memorable victory for the Eagles in the historic Beanpot Championship in February 2008, earning Boston College its 14th Beanpot Championship;

Whereas Boston College "Super Fans" traveled great distances all year and gave the Eagles strong support throughout their championship season; and

Whereas Boston College and its student athletes are well known for their commitment to both athletic and academic excellence, ranking sixth nationally among NCAA Division I schools in the graduation rate of student athletes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulate—

(A) the Boston College men's ice hockey team for winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Ice Hockey Championship; and

(B) the players, coaching staff, faculty and staff of the university, student body, and fans whose determination, strong work ethic, drive, and support made the 2007-2008 championship season possible;

(2) congratulate the University of Notre Dame men's ice hockey team for its success in the 2007-2008 season and for reaching the Frozen Four for the first time in the team's history; and

(3) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Boston College President Father William P. Leahy, S.J.;

(B) Boston College Athletic Director Gene DeFilippo; and

(C) Boston College Head Coach Jerry York.

SENATE RESOLUTION 515—COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF DITH PRAN

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. CORNYN) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 515

Whereas, between 1975 and 1979, Dith Pran dedicated his life and journalistic career to preventing genocide by exposing the atrocities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime in his native Cambodia;

Whereas Dith Pran, the subject of the Academy Award-winning film "The Killing Fields", survived the genocide in Cambodia in which up to 2,000,000 men, women, and children, including most of Dith Pran's extended family, were killed by the Khmer Rouge;

Whereas Dith Pran assisted many of his fellow journalists who were covering the impending takeover of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge to escape unharmed from the country when the capital of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, fell to the Khmer Rouge in 1975;

Whereas Dith Pran was subsequently imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge, and for 4 years endured forced labor, beatings, and unconscionable conditions of human suffering;

Whereas, in 1979, Dith Pran escaped from forced labor past the Khmer Rouge's "killing fields", a term Mr. Dith created to describe the mass graveyards he saw on his 40-mile journey to a refugee camp in Thailand;

Whereas Dith Pran, in the words of New York Times Executive Editor Bill Keller,

“reminds us of a special category of journalistic heroism, the local partner, the stringer, the interpreter, the driver, the fixer, who knows the ropes, who makes your work possible, who often becomes your friend, who may save your life, who shares little of the glory, and who risks so much more than you do”;

Whereas Dith Pran moved to New York in 1980 and devoted the remainder of his life and journalistic career to advocating against genocide and for human rights worldwide;

Whereas Dith Pran educated people around the world about the horrors of genocide in general, and the genocide in Cambodia in particular, through his creation of the Dith Pran Holocaust Awareness Project;

Whereas, in 1985, Dith Pran was appointed a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

Whereas Dith Pran lost his battle with cancer on March 30, 2008, leaving behind a world that better understands the tragedy of the genocide in Cambodia and the need to prevent future genocides, largely due to his compelling story, reporting, and advocacy;

Whereas Dith Pran said, “Part of my life is saving life. I don’t consider myself a politician or a hero. I’m a messenger. If Cambodia is to survive, she needs many voices.”; and

Whereas the example of Dith Pran should endure for generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) Dith Pran is a modern day hero and an exemplar of what it means to be a citizen of the United States and a citizen of the world;

(2) the United States owes a debt of gratitude to Dith Pran for his tireless work to prevent genocide and violations of fundamental human rights; and

(3) teachers throughout the United States should spread Dith Pran’s message by educating their students about his life, the genocide in Cambodia, and the collective responsibility of all people to prevent modern-day atrocities and human rights abuses.

SENATE RESOLUTION 516—SOLEMNLY COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGIC APRIL 1983 BOMBING OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN BEIRUT AND REMEMBERING THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AND THOSE WHO WERE INJURED

Mr. LUGAR (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 516

Whereas, on April 18, 1983, terrorists detonated a bomb at the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 63 people, including 42 American and Lebanese Embassy staff;

Whereas the bombing injured many other people, including 35 Embassy staff;

Whereas President Ronald Reagan denounced the “vicious terrorist bombing” as a “cowardly act”; and

Whereas the April 18, 1983 attack was at the time the deadliest attack against a United States diplomatic mission in history, but was followed by other terrorist attacks against Americans in Beirut including the bombing of the United States Marines barracks in Beirut on October 23, 1983, which killed 241 members of the United States Armed Forces, the bombing of the United States Embassy annex in Beirut on September 20, 1984, which killed 12 people, including 9 Embassy staff, and the bombing of

a United States Embassy vehicle on January 15, 2008, which injured 2 Lebanese employees of the Embassy and killed 3 Lebanese passers by: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate, on the 25th anniversary of the April 18, 1983, bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon—

(1) remembers the victims of the bombing;

(2) joins family and friends in mourning the American and Lebanese victims who lost their lives in this tragic bombing;

(3) condemns all terrorist acts that deliberately target the innocent; and

(4) reiterates its strong support for the people of Lebanon and their Government as they seek to build a better future free from the threat of terrorist violence.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4527. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4528. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4527. Ms. LANDRIEU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 97, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(1) in item number 273, by striking the project description and inserting “Improvements to on/off ramp system from I-10 to Ryan Street (LA 385), including installation of an exit ramp for eastbound traffic on I-10, incorporating, as necessary, portions of Front Street and Ann Street, and including repair and realignment of Lakeshore Drive, and to include the expansion of Contraband Bayou Bridge”;

SA 4528. Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 1195, to amend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 78, strike lines 3 and 4 and insert the following:

(386) in item number 3735 by striking the project description and inserting “Widening existing Highway 226, including a bypass of Cash and a new connection to Highway 49”;

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public

that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on National Parks. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 3:00 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony on the following bills: S. 662, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate resources at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the site as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; S. 827, to establish the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and for other purposes; S. 923 and H.R. 1528, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the New England National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes; S. 956, to establish the Land Between the Rivers National Heritage Area in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes; S. 2073, to amend the National Trails System Act relating to the statute of limitations that applies to certain claims; S. 2513, to modify the boundary of the Minute Man National Historical Park, and for other purposes; S. 2604, to establish the Baltimore National Heritage Area in the State of Maryland, and for other purposes; S. 2804, to adjust the boundary of the Everglades National Park, and for other purposes; H.R. 53, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a long-term lease with the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to provide land on the island of Saint John, Virgin Islands, for the establishment of a school, and for other purposes; and H.R. 1483 (Subtitles C, D, and F of title II, title III, section 4006 of title IV, and titles V and VI only), to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to extend the authorization for certain national heritage areas, and for other purposes.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6150, or by email to rachel.pasternack@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact David Brooks or Rachel Pasternack.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the Session of the Senate on April 15, 2008, at 10 a.m., to conduct a