

into battle, so of course not one of them has died in vain. But I want to do all I can—and I say this from my heart—to ensure that when we get into a conflict, we know there is a way out and that we can bring these conflicts to an end as soon as possible because so many sacrifices are being made, and no more so than the loss of America's finest.

SERGEANT HEATHER SPRINGER

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I rise today to honor Nebraska Army National Guard Sergeant Heather Springer, in recognition of receiving the Army Veterans' Association Medic of the Year award and the Bronze Star Medal for Valor.

Sergeant Springer is a native of Lincoln, NE, and currently attends the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing. She joined the Nebraska Army National Guard on April, 8, 2004, and served with the 313th Ground Ambulance and 110th Medical Battalion. On March 1, 2006, Sergeant Springer transferred to Charlie Company 2-135 General Support Aviation Battalion, 36th Combat Brigade, to become a flight medic. Soon after, she was deployed to Iraq in Diyala Province in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On July 15, 2007, Sergeant Springer was transported to a landing zone where several U.S. soldiers had been struck by a roadside bomb. While conducting treatment for a critically injured soldier, her team suddenly came under enemy fire. She immediately secured the wounded soldier she was attending to and then moved 10 meters to a second wounded soldier, willingly exposing herself to open fire. During this hostile situation, Sergeant Springer remained composed and demonstrated assertive judgment by concluding that the wounds sustained by the first soldier were more critical. She determinedly led part of her team through 60 meters of open road, completely susceptible to enemy fire, to secure the soldier inside a Black Hawk helicopter. Once inside the helicopter, Sergeant Springer noticed that the second wounded soldier she had attended to was being moved towards the helicopter, and instantly moved to help safely transport the soldier aboard the aircraft.

Sergeant Springer displayed remarkable courage and selflessness while placing her own life at risk. These two wounded warriors are alive today as a direct result of her steadfastness and superb medical skills. The DUSTOFF—Dedicated Unhesitating Service to Our Fighting Forces—Association recently awarded her the DUSTOFF Medic of the Year award. The DUSTOFF Association is a nonprofit organization for the Army Medical Department's enlisted and officer personnel, aviation crew members, and others who have actively supported Army aeromedical evacuation programs in war or in peacetime.

Sergeant Heather Springer's admirable performance in Iraq led her to be-

come the second woman in Nebraska National Guard history to receive the Bronze Star Medal for Valor. I wish Sergeant Springer all the best as she pursues her education in nursing school, and join all Nebraskans in honoring the heroism of this exceptional soldier.

ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, 1 year ago today, the horrific shootings at Virginia Tech claimed 32 innocent lives.

In remembrance of the lives of promise that were forever lost that shocking day, I would simply like to read each of their names into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD: Ross A. Alameddine; Christopher James Bishop; Brian R. Bluhm; Ryan Christopher Clark; Austin Michelle Cloyd; Jocelyne Couture-Nowak; Daniel Alejandro Perez Cueva; Kevin P. Granata; Matthew Gregory Gwaltney; Caitlin Millar Hammaren; Jeremy Michael Herbstritt; Rachael Elizabeth Hill; Emily Jane Hilscher; Jarrett Lee Lane; Matthew Joseph La Porte; Henry J. Lee; Liviu Librescu; G.V. Loganathan; Partahi Mamora Halomoan Lumbantoruan; Lauren Ashley McCain; Daniel Patrick O'Neil; Juan Ramon Ortiz-Ortiz; Minal Hiralal Panchal; Erin Nicole Peterson; Michael Steven Pohle, Jr.; Julia Kathleen Pryde; Mary Karen Read; Reema Joseph Samaha; Waleed Mohamed Shaalan; Leslie Geraldine Sherman; Maxine Shelly Turner; Nicole Regina White.

The day after the shooting, I mourned with the campus community at a convocation held on the campus of Virginia Tech. While the mourning of that tragic day continues for all of us, in the past year the Tech family has come together to support each other in a way that all of America admires. I know that those who have suffered most in the tragedy, and their families, remain in the thoughts and prayers of not only all Hokies, but indeed Americans across the country.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, Senate Democrats have worked hard to make progress on judicial nominations. That hard work has paid off, with circuit court vacancies at less than half of what they were when President Clinton left office. The majority leader last week was right to call the Republican complaints chutzpah.

Yesterday, the Michigan Senators and I were able to overcome a long impasse lasting more than a decade over vacancies on the Sixth Circuit. I have long urged the President to work with the Michigan Senators, and, after 7 years, he finally has. With his nomination of Judge Helene White of Michigan, we have a significant development that can lead to filling the last two vacancies on the Sixth Circuit before this year ends.

Our actions in resolving this impasse stands in sharp contrast to action of Senate Republicans who refused to consider any nomination to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in the last 3 years of the Clinton administration, leaving open four vacancies. Thanks to the hard work of Senator LEVIN and Senator STABENOW, we are now poised to fill them all.

Judge White was initially nominated 11 years ago, but her nomination was 1 of the more than 60 judicial nominees the Republicans pocket filibustered. After literally years of work, her re-nomination yesterday allows us to move forward with the support of the Senators from Michigan. I plan to consider the Sixth Circuit nominations as quickly as possible.

We are also poised to make progress to end a long impasse on the Fourth Circuit with the pending nomination of Steve Agee of Virginia. After insisting on nominating a series of contentious and time-consuming choices such as Jim Haynes, Claude Allen and Duncan Getchell, a nomination that was not supported by either the Republican Senator or the Democratic Senator from Virginia, the President this year has finally chosen to work with Senator WARNER and Senator WEBB. I have already said that I expect to hold the confirmation hearing on the Agee nomination as soon as the paperwork is completed. If we are able to confirm Steve Agee, there will be fewer Fourth Circuit vacancies than there were at the end of the Clinton administration.

Just last week, on a day when the Republicans chose to ignore the pressing problems affecting the lives of the American people and vent over judicial nominations, the Senate proceeded on schedule to confirm another five lifetime judicial appointments, including that of Catharina Haynes to fill the last vacancy on the Fifth Circuit. Similar to yesterday's progress with nominations to the Sixth Circuit, this stands in marked contrast to consideration of nominations to that court during the Clinton administration. At that time, the Republican-controlled Senate refused to consider nominees for the last 4 years of the Clinton administration, while the Chief Judge of the Fifth Circuit declared a circuit-wide emergency. Today, there are no vacancies on the Fifth Circuit.

I have said for 8 years that if the President is willing to work with us and consult in the constitutionally mandated process of advice and consent, we can make significant progress. When he does so, as he has recently with respect to Virginia and now Michigan, I have commended him. I do so again today.

It has taken years. It has taken effort. It has taken the steadfastness of Senators LEVIN and STABENOW. Today we can all take heart that we have broken through a decade's old impasse. Others have tried but been unsuccessful. I know that Senator HATCH tried and Senator SPECTER tried. We are succeeding. We are succeeding because we