

faint reasons for optimism. The Pakistani military spent most of August launching airstrikes against the Taliban militants attacking American forces from the fence straddling the Afghan-Pakistan border—an effort that resulted in more than 400 Taliban casualties and a shallow retreat by the terrorists. It's "shallow" because the Pakistani government followed up those airstrikes by declaring a ceasefire to coincide with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Legislators from the tribal areas promised political support for the top candidate in Pakistan's presidential election in exchange for the truce, which was announced in the days leading up to the country's vote.

Less than a week later, though, American forces finally showed signs of taking the matter of the central front of the war on terror into their own hands. A New York Times report indicated that U.S. special ops forces attacked al-Qaeda militants gathered in a Pakistani village called Jalal Khel. U.S. officials said the move might represent the early stages of a more dedicated and aggressive American presence in Pakistan in the wake of General Musharraf's resignation.

Don't get me wrong, a more sustained United States assault against the terrorists squatting in Pakistan is welcome news, and it signifies a more urgent effort to hunt down and snuff out the greatest threat to Americans' safety on our own shores.

But it's about 2,555 days late and \$11 billion short. Seven years after 9/11, the country is stoking what was supposed to be a complete and consuming "war on terror" with faint signs of a sustained operation in the country where the bad guys have been hiding for years.

How appalling. I doubt the families of the 3,000 innocents murdered on 9/11—and the 4,000 that followed them in Iraq—are content with it. After all, it's seven years, thousands of troops and billions of dollars later, and our country has failed to deliver on what we really owe them: Justice.

Nor have we answered the most important question pertaining to our nation's future: Can we really win this war with Islamic extremism? Because if we don't have the fire in our belly to defend the American troops stonewalled by the Afghan-Pakistani border; to hunt down and destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants camping out on the other side of that border; and do everything we possibly can to capture and kill Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, I fear we'll be left to deal with another fire—one raging in another building, burning a hole in another American city.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I rise to applaud the Senate's passage yesterday, as part of the so-called tax extenders legislation, of important tax provisions that will move our Nation toward a green economy. But I also would like to reiterate my support for our budget pay-as-you-go rule and to express my disappointment that a nonoffset version of the so-called alternative minimum tax, AMT, patch was part of the tax package the Senate passed.

With our national debt level at a record high, and growing by the day, responsible governing requires that we balance new spending and revenue reductions with decreased spending or revenue increases. I am proud to have supported Senator CONRAD's amend-

ment to the tax extenders package that would have provided for the extension of the AMT patch and other tax extenders on a fully offset basis. I also supported Senator CONRAD's effort to raise a point of order under the Senate rules against the extenders amendment which was not fully offset.

Although I strongly prefer Senator CONRAD's approach of abiding by our budget rules, I decided to support final passage of the partially offset tax package because of the many critical energy tax provisions in the bill. I have been a strong proponent of growing our green economy, which will both help us combat global climate change and encourage investment in new technologies that will create jobs and strengthen our position in the world economy. This tax extenders package includes extensions of incentives for renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, and the extension of the research and development tax credit on which businesses in Rhode Island and across the Nation have come to depend. In addition, the legislation that we passed yesterday includes a mental health parity law long championed by Congressman PATRICK KENNEDY of my State of Rhode Island and his father, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY. This landmark provision will ensure that health insurers provide mental health patients with quality coverage and will go down as one of the signature accomplishments of this Congress. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Congressman KENNEDY and the other architects of this important tax legislation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN BRUCE E. HAYS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute and express our Nation's sincere gratitude to a remarkable young soldier and his family. I was saddened to receive word that on September 17, 2008, Army CPT Bruce E. Hays of Cheyenne, WY, was killed in the line of duty while serving our country in the war on terrorism. Captain Hays died from injuries he sustained while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Gerdia Seria, Afghanistan.

Captain Hays first enlisted in the Army in 1984, and joined the Wyoming National Guard in 2000. He received his commission and became an officer later that year. He was a versatile soldier, commanding units ranging from field artillery to information technology. Captain Hays is remembered by his fellow Wyoming soldiers as an outstanding officer, commander and leader who was both loved and respected by his troops.

It is because of Bruce Hays and the blanket of freedom that he fought to provide that we sleep safely in our beds at night. The brave men and women of this Nation who answer the call to service and wear the uniform of the

Armed Forces deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. They put their very lives on the line every day for their fellow countrymen. And because of them and their families, our Nation remains safe and free in the face of danger and those who seek to harm us.

Captain Hays represents the epitome of this selfless service to a cause greater than one's self. He was deployed as chief of an Embedded Training Team, charged with mentoring the Afghan police forces to defend the people of Afghanistan against terrorism. Laying aside his own self interest, Captain Hays gave his life in a far off land helping a fledgling democracy and a newly freed people to live the dreams that freedom and liberty bring.

In the book of John, Jesus said that, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend." CPT Bruce Hays gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, for you, me, and every single American. He gave his life defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice. And there are no words to express the profound gratitude that our Nation owes this brave soldier and his family.

Captain Hays is survived by a loving family including his wife Marie and their children, Bethany, Eleanor, John, Alfonso, and Genevieve, and his parents Barbara and Leonard. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the Wyoming National Guard and the U.S. Army. We say goodbye to a devoted family man and an American citizen soldier. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to CPT Bruce E. Hays for his courage, his love of country and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and will remain so in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family, and greet him with open arms.

STAFF SERGEANT NATHAN M. COX.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I rise today to honor SSgt Nathan M. Cox who was killed on September 20, 2008 in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Cox was serving with B Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Hood, TX, and died following the injuries that he sustained after his vehicle encountered an improvised exploding device by the roadside. I would like to express my condolences to Nathan's friends and family, in particular Nathan's parents Jane and Leslie, wife Annie, and 5-year-old daughter Sophia. They are in my thoughts and prayers.

Staff Sergeant Cox was deployed to Afghanistan in July of this year, having spent a year in Iraq prior to his arrival in Afghanistan. He had attended Davenport Central High School in Davenport, IA, and enlisted in the Army straight after leaving high school. Nathan spent 3 years in Bosnia during the mid 1990s. Then, in 2005, at age 29, he re-entered the Army to make it his career. Nathan made the ultimate sacrifice defending the country and the