

on the button. It is unnecessary, it is dangerous, it is a repetition of history, and it is something we should be debating out here. It just can't be something that is casually added without a full appreciation in our country for what the consequences are going to be long term.

So we have an incredible opportunity. It is timely. The President is visiting Hiroshima. It should weigh on the consciences of every one of us that we have a responsibility to make sure we are reducing and not increasing the likelihood of nuclear war occurring.

I have filed an amendment to strike the provision from the NDAA. I urge all of my colleagues to support it. I think that second amendment is also one that deserves a full debate on the Senate Floor. If we want other countries to reduce their nuclear arsenals and restrain their nuclear war plans, the United States must take the lead instead of wasting billions of dollars on dangerous new nuclear weapons that do nothing to keep our Nation safe.

President Obama should scale back his nuclear weapons buildup. Instead of provoking Russia and China with expanding missile defenses that will ultimately fail, we should work toward a new arms control agreement.

As President Obama said in Prague in 2009, let us honor our past by reaching for a better future. The lesson of the past and the lesson of Hiroshima is clear. Nuclear weapons must never be used again on this planet.

President Obama did an excellent job in reaching a nuclear arms control agreement with Iran. That was important, because if Iran was right now on its way to the development of a nuclear weapon, there is no question that Saudi Arabia and other countries in that region would also be pursuing a nuclear weapon. We would then have a world where people were not listening to each other, where people would be threatening each other with annihilation, with total destruction.

Here is where we are. We are either going to live together or we are going to die together. We are either going to know each other or we are going to exterminate each other. The final choice that we all have and the least we should be able to say—if that point in the future is reached and those missiles are starting to be launched that have nuclear warheads on board—is that we tried, that we really tried to avoid that day.

That is our challenge here on the Senate floor—to have this debate, to give ourselves the next year to have this question raised as to whether we want to engage in a Cold War-like escalation of new offensive and new defensive nuclear weapons to be constructed in our country, which for sure then would trigger the same response in Russia and China. By the way, for sure it is saying to Pakistan, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and to any other country that harbors its own secret military desire to have these weapons that they

should not listen to the United States because we are preaching nuclear temperance from a bar stool. We are not, in fact, abiding by what we say that the rest of the world should do.

So we should be debating that right now. We should have this challenge presented to us and to have the words be spoken as to what the goals are for these weapons. If the Defense Department says to us this year that this leads to a capacity to use nuclear weapons in a limited nuclear war—and they were saying that to us in the last 6 months—do we really want to have these weapons then constructed in our country? Is that really what we want to have as our legacy?

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG CHEMICAL SAFETY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY BILL

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I also wish to spend a couple of minutes talking about another issue that is a relic of the Cold War era, and that is TSCA, the legislation that deals with toxic chemicals within our country.

There was a law passed 40 years ago to deal with toxic chemicals in our country, but ultimately that law never worked. When we look back, it is like a political, environmental Edsel, still sitting in the garage 40 years later but not useful in protecting American families from the chemicals in our society—asbestos and hundreds and thousands of others. It is just not usable.

Congress stands ready right now, thank God, to reform the last of the “core four” environmental statutes that have yet to be modernized. I hope we will do so with a stronger bipartisan vote than on any major environmental statute in recent American history, and that we do so soon.

This historic vote to comprehensively reform the Toxic Substances Control Act comes after years of hard work by many Senators on both sides of the aisle. We worked for some months to reconcile the two bills, and all of us were driven by the same reason. Since it was written four decades ago, TSCA has sat there untouched. It is a statute that simply does not work to protect anyone. Ever since industries successfully challenged EPA's proposed asbestos ban, EPA has not been able to effectively use the authority Congress intended it to have.

In conference, we truly did take the best of both bills. We made sure EPA will have industry fees to do its chemical safety work. We made sure there will be enforceable deadlines for EPA to write chemical safety rules and for industry to comply with them. We fixed the legal problems in the law that caused the asbestos ban to be overturned and that paralyzed EPA and prevented them from regulating some extremely toxic chemicals. We ensured that when EPA studies a chemical, it considers only the environmental or health effects of that chemical, and that it only considers the potential

cost of regulation when it is writing a rule to regulate it. We made sure that EPA would act more quickly to regulate the most dangerous chemicals, and that vulnerable subpopulations, such as children, pregnant women, and workers would be protected. We made sure the industry could not continue to improperly keep information about dangerous chemicals secret any longer.

In some of the last negotiations that I helped to lead, we made sure that States could continue with the work they are already doing to protect their residents. I am particularly proud that I was able to protect Massachusetts's pending flame-retardant law in these last few key changes to the bill that were agreed to in the last few days.

The fact that we have a bill that has the Humane Society and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce both urging a “yes” vote tells you something. The fact that the bill is supported by the EPA, the chemical industry, many environmental stakeholders, and the trial lawyers tells you something about this bill.

This is like a political Halley's Comet. When you have JIM INHOFE and DAVID VITTER agreeing with ED MARKEY on a piece of legislation, you should take note of that moment in the history of passing legislation. That is where we are. We have something that is historic. The environmental bill of a generation is about to pass.

The fact that 403 Members of the House of Representatives voted yes—403 voted in support of this bill—tells you something. It tells you we rolled up our sleeves and we worked together on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to compromise in the way that Americans expect us to.

I thank all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol, and I look forward to watching the President sign this important legislation to protect the health and well-being of all Americans. This is a bill that does protect us from the dangers that Americans are exposed to—whether they are Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives.

This is the way the Chamber should operate. This is the way we should also consider nuclear warfighting policy. We should have the same kind of attention, the same kind of respect for the consequences for generations to come in our country. We should give it the same kind of respectful, bipartisan, bicameral attention that the public can understand.

I thank the Chair for this opportunity.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONORING NEBRASKA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to continue my tribute to Nebraska's heroes and the current generation of men and women who lost their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a special story to tell.

CORPORAL ADRIAN ROBLES

Today I will share the story of the life of Marine Cpl Adrian Robles of Scottsbluff, NB. Adrian was known throughout Scottsbluff for his big smile. His older sister Beatriz remembers it this way: "As soon as he smiled, even if you were mad at him, you would stop and have to smile."

Behind that big smile, though, was a tough young man. More than anything, Adrian wanted to be a marine. This longing to serve his country was a point of pride and tradition in Adrian's family. His grandfather, Pedro Torres, served as a fighter pilot in World War II. Pedro's stories of service and adventure inspired Adrian's quest to become a marine, and their bond was a source of joy throughout the family.

As Adrian's father Cesar recalls, "He loved his grandpa so much. He was a hero to him."

When he was 16, Adrian approached his parents and told them he wanted to be a marine. He didn't want to wait. He even prepared a waiver for them to sign, which would have allowed Adrian to join the Corps when he turned 17. While they admired the passion in their young son, Adrian's parents stood firm. They wanted Adrian to focus on completing his high school education.

Deterred but not discouraged, Adrian decided to join the high school soccer team. Soccer became an outlet for him, not only as an athlete but as a way to train and get in shape for the Marines. Adrian graduated from Scottsbluff High School in May of 2005. As expected, he immediately enlisted in the Marine Corps.

In the year that followed, Adrian completed basic training and served a full tour in Iraq by the end of 2007. His determination impressed his fellow marines. GySgt Trent Kuhlhoof served with Adrian during a tour in Iraq. Adrian was the kind of person who naturally bonded with everyone. As Sergeant Kuhlhoof remembers, "It was hard for me to get mad at him—for anything."

Adrian had discovered his calling. He worked toward excellence, and he loved being a marine. A marksman is the centerpiece of every Marine combat team, and Adrian was a good one. By the age of 21, he had earned three Good Conduct Medals, a rare feat in the military.

In the spring of 2008, Cpl Adrian Robles deployed to Afghanistan as part of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Division. Their mission was to train local Afghan military forces, but by the fall this changed to a security mission as

tensions rose in the dangerous territory of Helmand Province.

A few months later, on October 22, 2008, Adrian was on patrol when suddenly his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. Corporal Robles was killed instantly. His unit was scheduled to leave Afghanistan 2 months later.

On November 2, 2008, hundreds of friends and neighbors from Scottsbluff lined the streets from the church to the cemetery. An honor guard and horse and carriage team transported the casket to its final resting place.

In a career of 3 short years, Corporal Robles earned three Good Conduct Medals, two Sea Service Deployment Ribbons, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Purple Heart.

Adrian's mother Yolanda recalls that his life's passion was to serve his country. She notes that he hated war and knew the dangers, but he loved being a marine. A brave, disciplined, and joyful young man, Adrian lived a short life, but his imprint is felt by the countless people who knew and loved him. Perhaps his devotion is summed up best by the tattoo on his left arm, which read: "Your Freedom. My Life. Without Complaint."

Adrian embodied the strength and determination that Nebraskans are known for all over the world. He lived passionately, and he earned his dream of being a U.S. marine. Cpl Adrian Robles is a hero and I am honored to tell his story.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Alaska.

REMEMBERING JOHN AND ERMA SCHNABEL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, we are about to begin the Memorial Day state work period and many of us will be traveling in our home states next week. I am blessed because I am going home to Alaska. Tomorrow I will be in Haines. This is a magnificent community in truly a magnificent State. But when I arrive in Haines, something will be missing, and that is the absence of two of Haines' most prominent citizens—John and Erma Schnabel.

John Schnabel passed in March at the age of 96 years old, and Erma, his wife of 65 years, passed shortly thereafter at the age of 87. John was regarded by his family and the people of Haines as a living legend. If you don't believe that is true, or if you say all of us have living legends in our community, no less of an authority than People Magazine referred to John as a "living legend" in an article which noted his passing. He was not just a local legend. He was known the world over as "Grandpa." He was the patriarch of the Discovery Channel series "Gold Rush: Alaska." But to us Alaskans, he was

simply one of the many exceptional people who populate our exceptional State. John was born in Kansas in 1920. He was the son of a wheat farmer. His father first moved to Alaska to seek a better life away from the Depression. He served in the military during World War II. He was a proud member of the American Legion. He married Erma in 1950 and they raised five kids.

Returning to Haines, John entered the timber business. He owned a lumber mill in town. He was one of the region's first industrialists. He was involved in everything. He operated a hotel, a lumberyard, a hardware store. He built four downtown commercial buildings. He was one of Haines' largest landowners. But changing political attitudes toward timber harvest in Southeast Alaska and the regulations that followed put John out of the timber business. Those powerful forces, however, did not put John down. He placer mined for fun and invested in small businesses. He was the mayor of Haines. He was an outstanding bridge player. He was an avid reader. I understand that David McCullough's biography of Harry Truman was one of his favorites, even though he was a loyal Republican.

It was only after John was recuperating from heart surgery that he entered the mining business in a big way. Think about it, most people rehabilitate from a heart surgery by doing more walking or going to the gym. John Schnabel decided he was going to work a mine. He worked the mine to remain active. He said it was doctor's orders. He did this until 2 years ago. Effectively, until the time he was 94, he was working the mine.

The Discovery Channel folks wandered by and found John Schnabel an interesting man. By 2010, Grandpa was a global celebrity—a reluctant celebrity but a celebrity nonetheless; the star of a reality TV show that ran for six seasons before he passed away.

John and Erma were friends of mine. I respected John's business acumen and his political leadership, but I really respected the relationship he had with Erma. The last time I visited with John and Erma was 2 years ago in August. I was there at the Haines Assisted Living Center. I came in and visited with John. John was talking politics with me and with anybody else who was listening, chatting around the room. Then, he left to go sit in the corner of the dining area, sat next to Erma. He didn't say anything for probably half an hour, 45 minutes. He just sat quietly with her, holding her hand. That really moved me when I saw them. Sixty plus years of marriage and still holding hands. John had always been the builder. Erma was known as the carer. She took care of the family. She took care of the community. Legend has it that there wasn't a person in Haines who had not dined at her table at one time or another.

They are both gone from Haines, but they are certainly together in Heaven.