

and improvement of retirement benefits. All his hard work has not gone unnoticed, Senator CLELAND has been recognized nationally as the "Minute Man of the Year," an award given by the Reserve Officers Association of America to two individuals annually for their tremendous leadership in the areas of military and national security. There is no doubt that on and off the battlefield, MAX was a leader for the Armed Forces.

Senator CLELAND also provided support to military personnel stationed at the Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. In 1997, during the devastating floods in North Dakota, several hundred active duty personnel from the Grand Forks base were unable to access disaster relief because Federal law limited assistance to personnel living on the base. Senator CLELAND, as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was instrumental in amending the law to enable those servicemen living off base to be eligible for this critical disaster assistance.

MAX's bravery, courage, and passion for these issues and many others will be missed. It has been an honor to serve with somebody who represents his constituents with such energy, drive and passion. I would like to join my colleagues in wishing the Senator and his family the best in the future and paying tribute to his outstanding public service. I wish him well.

TRIBUTE TO REPRESENTATIVE JAMES V. HANSEN

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise to pay tribute to my long-time friend and colleague, Representative JAMES V. HANSEN. After 22 years of dedicated service to his country and to the State of Utah, Jim has chosen to end his career as a Member of Congress and return home to Utah and to his grandchildren.

I am pleased that Mr. HANSEN will be able to enjoy his retirement, but we will miss him. Utah has never been better served by a Member of Congress. Just this year he was described by a national media source as one of the 10 most powerful Members of the House of Representatives. Considering the number of Members of that body, that is really saying something. Representative HANSEN has had a very positive impact on our Nation, but his impact on Utah and Utahns is truly incalculable.

Mr. HANSEN was the first Representative from Utah to chair a full committee. Due in large part to the respect he earned among his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, he was appointed to chair the high-profile Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

As some of my colleagues may know, Utah is made up of about 70 percent public lands which includes national parks, Bureau of Land Management lands, national forests, national monuments, national wildlife refuges, and

vast military holdings. As a very senior member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, Representative HANSEN has the protector and promoter of so many of Utah's interests.

Mr. HANSEN's service to the public has spanned more than four decades. He spent the first 12 years of his public service career on the City Council of Farmington, UT. Following that, he served for four terms as a member of the Utah House of Representatives, including one term as the Speaker of the House. In 1980, Mr. HANSEN was elected to Congress where he has served diligently until today.

Mr. HANSEN's honesty, hard work, and strong character have made him a lawmaker that we will never forget. I am one of many who will sorely miss his plain talking leadership and his wisdom on matters of public policy. On behalf of my colleagues in the Senate and the people of Utah, I would like to publicly thank JIM and his wonderful wife Ann for giving so much of themselves to their State and to their Nation.

GRATITUDE FOR NEW ZEALAND'S FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today, on behalf of my State of Oregon, to express our deepest gratitude for the New Zealanders who put their lives on the line this last summer in fighting the ravenous wildfires experienced in the West.

Even as the rains of fall settle into the forests of the Pacific Northwest, it is not difficult to remember the fiery infernos that engulfed the West only a few months ago. The year 2002 was the second worst fire season in 50 years. Nationwide 21 lives were lost and 6.7 million acres were burned.

It was one of the Nation's largest fires, called the Biscuit Fire, that drew a cadre of international firefighters to Oregon, the world's best sent to join the fight against our worst disaster. The Biscuit Fire, the largest wildfire in Oregon in over a century, eventually burned 500,000 acres in southwestern Oregon. At times, firefighters put the chances of losing one or all of the Illinois Valley's four towns at 75 percent. However, 7,000 of the world's best firefighters beat the odds and staved off an exploding fire that threatened hundreds of square miles and thousands of homes. As a result of their relentless work, no lives were lost and structural loss was virtually nonexistent.

On behalf of my State of Oregon, I want to thank and commend the brave New Zealand firefighters who helped win that battle against wildfire. They are John Barnes, Darryl Robson, John Sutton, Richard McNamara, Paul Tolladay, Phil Wishnowsky, Robin Thompson, Trevor Tiday, Jock Darragh, and Ross Hamilton.

While I hope that such perilous circumstances will never call these fire-

fighters back to Oregon or elsewhere, I know that forest fires will continue to burn and brave firefighters will continue to put their lives between the fire and ours. We will never forget that.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BOB SMITH

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to and recognize the hard work of my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator BOB SMITH. Since joining the Senate in 1990, he has fought with honesty and commitment for the issues that he believed to be most important.

As the ranking member and former chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, he focused great attention on reforms of the Corps of Engineers and funding to expand and improve transportation infrastructure. Also, as a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator SMITH fought passionately for a strong military, and always made national security a top priority.

I had the pleasure of working with BOB SMITH in his efforts to establish accountability measures for missing MIAs and POWs. In his capacity as a member of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, Senator SMITH was very helpful in answering and addressing questions about Vietnam POWs from North Dakota. He also helped North Dakotans on POW issues from the cold war era.

I also had the privilege of serving with Senator SMITH on the Ethics Committee, which he chaired. I found him to be completely fair and non-partisan in his conduct of his duties.

He also was one of the first of my colleagues to console me on the untimely death of my chief of staff, Kent Hall.

Mr. President, it has been an honor to serve in the Senate with BOB SMITH. I have the utmost respect for his service to the people of New Hampshire. While sitting in the historic desk of Daniel Webster, he has made contributions not only to the Senate but also to our Nation. I would like to join my colleagues in wishing Senator SMITH and his family the best in the future.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of last year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred December 28, 2001 in Marshfield, MA. According to police, a teenage assailant beat a man because the assailant thought the victim was gay. The victim was standing outside a local store when a car containing three men pulled into the parking lot. One of

the men in the car yelled anti-gay obscenities at the victim. The victim entered the store with two friends, and upon exiting, was beaten by the assailant. The assailant yelled anti-gay epithets while punching and kicking the victim, continuing the beating even after the victim fell to the ground.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

21ST CENTURY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thank the Senate for voting to end debate and to pass the bipartisan 21st Century Department of Justice Authorization Act conference report. I commend the Majority Leader for bringing this important legislation the floor and filing cloture in order for the Senate to take final action on the conference report.

I regret that consideration and a vote on final passage on this important measure was delayed, but I thank the overwhelming majority of my colleagues for supporting cloture and passage of the conference report.

This measure was passed by the House, by a vote of 400 to 4, last Thursday. All Democrats were prepared to pass the conference report that same day last week and any day this week. Given the Republicans' objection to proceed to a vote and given the refusal to agree to a time agreement, the Majority Leader was required to file cloture. I am glad that the filibuster is over.

This legislation is truly bipartisan. It passed the House 400 to 4. The conference report was signed by every conferee, Republican or Democrat, including Senator HATCH and Representatives SENSENBRENNER, HYDE, and LAMAR SMITH.

Senators from both sides of the aisle spoke in favor of the legislation. In particular, I thank Senator HUTCHISON for coming to the floor on Tuesday to support this conference report. Senator HUTCHISON has spoken to me many times about the need for more judgeships along the Texas border with Mexico to handle immigration and criminal cases.

The conference report includes three new judgeships in the conference report for Texas, one more than was included in the bill reported to the Senate by the Senate Judiciary Committee and passed by the Senate last December.

I thank Senator SESSIONS for his statements on Tuesday and today in support of this bipartisan conference report.

Although he opposes Senator HATCH's legislation regarding automobile dealer

arbitration, which enjoys more than 60 Senate cosponsors and 200 House cosponsors and was included in the conference report, Senator SESSIONS is supporting this conference report because it will improve the Department of Justice and support local law enforcement agencies across the nation. I appreciate Senator SESSIONS' work on the provisions in the conference report on the Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grants and the Centers for Domestic Preparedness in Alabama and other States.

Senator BROWBACK also spoke in favor of certain immigration provisions in this bill that he worked on with Senator KENNEDY, the Chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee. In particular, the conference report includes language sought by Senators CONRAD and BROWBACK to reauthorize the program allowing foreign doctors educated in the United States to remain here if they will practice in underserved communities. This is a crucial provision to ensure that residents in some of our most rural states receive adequate medical care.

The conference report also contains another important immigration provision to permit H-1B aliens who have labor certification applications caught in lengthy agency backlogs to extend their status beyond the sixth year limitation or, if they have already exceeded such limitation, to have a new H-1B petition approved so they can apply for an H-1B visa to return from abroad or otherwise re-obtain H-1B status. Either a labor certification application or a petition must be filed at least 365 days prior to the end of the 6th year in order for the alien to be eligible under this section.

The slight modification to existing law made by this section is necessary to avoid the disruption of important projects caused by the sudden loss of valued employees. At a time when our economy is weak, this provision is intended to help. I thank Senator KENNEDY and Senator BROWBACK for their work on this provision and their contributions to the conference report. I thank Senator FEINSTEIN for her excellent speech earlier this week in support of this conference report. Senator FEINSTEIN has been a tireless advocate for the needs of California, including the needs of the federal judiciary along the southern border. She has led the effort to increase judicial and law enforcement resources along our southern border. I am proud to have served as the chair of the House-Senate conference committee that unanimously reported a bill that includes five judgeships for the Southern District of California. Long overdue relief for the Southern District of California could be on the way once this conference report is adopted.

Senator BIDEN also contributed a great deal to this conference report. He has fought doggedly to authorize a new Violence Against Women Office at the

Justice Department, and his efforts have borne fruit in this legislation. He has also been one of the Senate's best advocates for reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which we do here. In addition, he was a cosponsor of the Drug Abuse Education, Prevention, and Treatment Act, and we have included many provisions from that bill in this conference report.

I also would like to thank Senator DURBIN for statements on the Senate floor and his dedicated efforts to authorize a new Violence Against Women Office, to expand the number of Boys and Girls Clubs in our nation, and to create new judgeships in Illinois.

Senator KOHL was a tremendous help in our efforts to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, especially Title V of that Act, which provides for crucial prevention programs for our nation's youth.

Senator CARNAHAN deserves the credit for the inclusion of the Law Enforcement Tribute Act in this conference report. That provision provides Federal assistance for local communities seeking to honor fallen law enforcement officers. Without her tireless work, we would not have been able to include that provision in this conference report.

For his part, Senator FEINGOLD was able to include his and Senator HATCH's Motor Vehicle Franchise Contract Arbitration Fairness Act in this conference report. That bill will ensure that auto dealers will have a level playing field in their disputes with the auto manufacturers.

Finally, I also thank Senator REID for his helpful comments and support throughout the debate on the legislation.

Of course, our bipartisanship is evidenced by our including authorization for additional judgeships not only in California but also in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Ohio, North Carolina, Illinois and Florida. I have tried to improve on the record we inherited.

In the six and one-half years that they controlled the Senate, the Republican majority was willing to add only eight judgeships to be appointed by a Democratic President, and most of those were in Texas and Arizona, States with two Republican Senators. We have, on the other hand, proceeded at our earliest opportunity to increase federal judgeships by 20, including in the border States where they are most needed, well aware these positions will be filled with appointments by a Republican President who has shown little interest in working with Democrats in the Senate. These include a number of jurisdictions with Republican Senators.

I also commend the senior Senator from California for her leadership on the "James Guelff and Chris McCurley Body Armor Act," the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program reauthorization, and the many anti-drug abuse provisions included in this conference