

Commission on the Status of Women, and the Human Rights Commission. It seemed logical that Hadassah would gain this status, routinely given to many organizations, given its leadership for 90 years in medicine, education, welfare, and women's rights abroad. Hadassah, however, had to fight a long battle with the anti-Semitism present in the United Nations in order to gain this status.

I salute Hadassah for its 90 years of charity and leadership as a humanitarian organization both in America and Israel and look forward to continue to working closely with its membership.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, a wonderful organization that exemplifies a spirit of volunteerism and commitment to others is celebrating their 90th anniversary. With more than 300,000 members nationwide, Hadassah is one of the largest women's and the largest Jewish membership organization in America.

Hadassah was founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold as a group of women "interested in the promotion of Jewish institutions and enterprises in Palestine." What began as an attempt to provide health and social services to both Jews and Arabs in Palestine has grown into myriad undertakings.

Today, Hadassah's major activities in Israel and in the United States span the arenas of health, education, social services, and environmental preservation. For instance, the Hadassah Medical Organization supplies quality medical care to individuals in the Middle East, regardless of race, religion, or nationality. The Youth Aliya Program provides housing and support for disadvantaged and immigrant youth in Israel.

Additionally, the Jewish National Fund helps to build parks and preserve Israel's natural resources, while Young Judea helps U.S. teenagers build connections to Israel and Jewish life. In all of its endeavors, Hadassah has fulfilled its mission to promote a peaceful and prosperous Israel, ensure Jewish continuity, pursue social justice, and provide for the health, education, and well-being of individuals both in Israel and in America.

Over its 90 years of existence, Hadassah has touched the lives of millions of individuals in a tangible manner. In a time when the Middle East remains embroiled in controversy and violence, it is comforting to find a group whose commitment has not changed over time. Even today, Hadassah provides lessons that we can all learn from. I am proud my home state of California boasts more than 25,000 members, people devoted to improving the world around them. As a lifetime member, I would like to thank Hadassah for its efforts, and look forward to celebrating future milestones with them.

#### RETIREMENT OF MARIE E. MULLIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as chairman of the Select Committee on Ethics, it is my privilege to give public notice and honorable mention to the outstanding service that Marie Mullis has provided the committee and the Senate for the past 31 years.

Marie began her Senate career in 1971 as an employee of the predecessor to the Select Committee on Ethics. In 1977 she joined the staff of the Ethics Committee where she advanced from support staff, to executive assistant, to professional staff member. As a professional staff member for the past 14 years she has drawn from a reserve of institutional knowledge, experience, and wisdom to advise Senate staff about the Senate Code of Official Conduct. The committee commends her commitment to its work and is honored to have been the beneficiary of her loyal service over the years.

Despite the impact of her resignation, we—the committee members and committee staff who regard her highly—are pleased to see Marie move forward into retirement and receive reward for her faithful service to the United States Senate.

Thank you, Marie, for your hard work.

#### READ ACROSS AMERICA

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, since 1998, Americans have celebrated "Read Across America" in March to honor Dr. Seuss' birthday. Millions of Americans take part in this nationwide effort to promote reading among our children while paying tribute to Dr. Seuss' great legacy.

It is hard to imagine our childhoods without the delightful books of Dr. Seuss. Such classics as "The Cat in the Hat and Green Eggs and Ham" taught us life lessons we will never forget. My personal favorite is "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" because it encourages children to reach for their dreams. I loved reading the book to my children, and now read it to my grandson. I also enjoy reading it to students while visiting schools in California.

Schools throughout the Nation hold special events to celebrate "Read Across America." This year, schools plan to have breakfasts of green eggs and ham, reading relays, birthday parties for Dr. Seuss, choral readings and museum exhibits. Celebrities and elected officials will join in the fun by reading books to children.

"Read Across America" is a day to celebrate the joy of reading and a return to our childhood, but it also provides an opportunity to address a very important issue: children's literacy in the United States. It has been proven that if children read more at home, they will do better at school. "Read Across America" can help prepare our children for success.

I take great pride in celebrating the fifth anniversary of the National Edu-

cation Association's "Read Across America." Books introduce children to a wealth of knowledge and a world of imagination. Last year, celebrations took place in every State in the Nation, involving more than 35 million people. This year, NEA expects an even bigger turnout.

I extend my best wishes to participating schools, and encourage all Americans to get involved in this wonderful celebration of reading.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. 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 October 28, 1993 in Watsonville, CA. Four men with a rifle threatened a gay man and kicked in his apartment door. The attackers, Miguel Lopez, 23, Israel Lopez, 18, Cesar Fuentes, 18, and a 16-year-old were arrested in connection with the incident.

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, we can change hearts and minds as well.

#### SUPPORT FOR U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS SERVING IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the greatest source of strength of our military forces engaged in the war on terrorism—the support they receive from the American people. Over Thanksgiving, Senator WARNER and I traveled to Central Asia to visit with our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Nothing lifted our spirits more than sharing Thanksgiving with these wonderful troops. Nothing lifted their spirits more than our message that the American people totally support their mission and are deeply grateful for their service.

We have seen that support on display in countless ways in recent months. Americans from every corner of our country have reached into their hearts and reached out to our men and women in uniform, especially over the holidays. One particular story came to my attention that I think captures the American spirit at this time in history.

Just before Thanksgiving, Kasi Brannan of Covington, LA, decided to send a simple holiday card to her son, AT3 Eric Lepkowski, who was serving on the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* in the Arabian Sea. When

family, friends, and members of the community learned of her effort, they wanted to add their wishes as well. When a television station and newspaper from New Orleans reported the story, people from all over Louisiana wanted to add their appreciation. And when other families and friends of sailors abroad the *Theodore Roosevelt* heard the news through the Internet and e-mail, they wanted to include wishes to their own husbands, wives, sons, brothers, sisters and friends. As the news spread across the Nation, even total strangers wrote in to express their thanks to our servicemen and women.

What started out as a simple holiday message to one sailor had quickly grown to a greeting card from all America—a 75-foot banner with more than 1,000 stars, each containing the holiday wishes from grateful Americans from nearly every state and at least three continents. Among them were several families from my home state of Michigan. Those wishes made all the difference to the 5,000 men and women of the *Theodore Roosevelt*, who displayed the banner in one of their hanger bays as a reminder of home and a daily inspiration.

I know my Senate colleagues will join me in celebrating the spirit of America's unity embodied in Kasi Brannen and all our military families who endure separation from their loved ones and who sacrifice in ways that most Americans will never know.

I know my Senate colleagues will join me in acknowledging the commitment of our senior military leaders to the morale and welfare of our forces, as evidenced in the efforts of Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Fallon and U.S. Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Charles Moore Jr. to quickly transport the 1,000-star banner to the *Theodore Roosevelt* in time for the holidays.

Finally, I know my Senate colleagues will also join me in honoring the service of AT3 Eric Lepkowski and all the brave, dedicated and skilled men and women serving in the armed forces to keep this Nation free.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleague from Michigan in thanking Kasi Brannen for her strong patriotism and undying support for our men and women deployed to the theater of conflict.

Kasi Brannen's son, AT3 Eric Lepkowski, serves aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Roosevelt* in the Arabian Sea. When she began assembling a Christmas card for him, she asked friends and family in her hometown of Covington, Louisiana, to contribute well wishes and greetings. Soon, word got out in Covington that she was going to send a card to the *Roosevelt* and messages poured in from all over town. Then word spread through the entire Northshore, and then to New Orleans, and to Baton Rouge, and then all over the country. Kasi's Christmas greetings to Eric became the opportunity for the entire country to send

its thanks and their holiday blessings to all the men and women serving overseas to protect America. These messages came not just from Navy families, but from scores of Americans who wanted to express their support for our troops. A simple Christmas card turned into a 75 foot banner with over 1,000 messages on it.

Getting this banner to the men and women of the *Roosevelt* was no small feat. December had rolled around and people, known and unknown to Kasi, still desired to add their message to the banner. Kasi was wondering if she could get the package to the *Roosevelt* in time for Christmas. When the Navy found out about Ms. Brannen's project, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William J. Fallon, and the Commander of the Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Charles W. More, offered to transport the banner personally.

The 5,000 men and women serving aboard the *Roosevelt* received the banner in time for Christmas and delighted in reading the messages from home. We can only imagine the effect that these messages had on the sailors of the *Roosevelt*. When our sailors go on deployment, they live in cramped quarters and go without the usual creature comforts. This, combined with the isolation and loneliness of combat can take its toll and easily diminish morale. When one of our sailors receives a letter from home, it reconnects them with their families and friends and reminds them just what they are fighting for.

When our nation goes to war, it is fought on many fronts in many different ways. First and foremost, it is fought by the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who are constantly in harm's way. But these men and women are fully supported by their families and friends at home. I think the spouses and children of all of our fighting men and women know their duty in keeping up morale, and they will follow through.

I am extremely proud of all fighting men and women from Louisiana. Our State is home to thousands of servicemembers, and they are part of the overall force which protects this great nation. I am also extremely proud of our citizens who support these men and women in uniform. The efforts of Kasi Brannen are truly superb and are deserving of great recognition.

I want to join my good friend from Michigan in praising Kasi Brannen and the hundreds of other Americans who contributed to her project. I also want to commend the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William J. Fallon, and the Commander of the Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Charles W. More for their extraordinary efforts in keeping up the morale of our fighting men and women. I know that my colleagues in the Senate join me in commending the husbands, wives and family back home, our service men and women deployed abroad, and the commanders who lead them.

#### CONFIRMATION OF RICHARD J. LEON, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR DC

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Mr. Richard "Dick" J. Leon, the new U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia. I have known Dick for many years, and I was pleased that the Senate unanimously confirmed him on February 14, 2002.

Dick has all the key qualities necessary to be a fine a District Judge. He is bright, thoughtful, and ethical. He is a personable individual, who cares deeply about the law. I first worked with Dick in 1987, when I was serving on the Senate/House Select Iran-contra Committee. He had been a distinguished Federal prosecutor for the Justice Department, when our ranking Republican on the committee, DICK CHENEY, hired him to serve as our deputy counsel. His performance on our staff was outstanding and his legal skills as an investigator, counselor, and examiner of witnesses were critical to the work of the select committee.

Dick Leon has distinguished himself as a counselor, handling complex criminal and civil litigation. But, his commitment to legal education is also noteworthy. Over his 28 year career, Dick has served in various positions helping teach others about law. He was a full-time law professor for 4 years at St. John's University Law School in New York, and he currently serves as an adjunct law professor at both the Georgetown University and Catholic University law schools in Washington, DC.

From time to time, Dick has been called to assist Congress with highly sensitive matters. Whether it has been counseling a bipartisan task force or serving on a congressional commission, he always has conducted himself with the utmost integrity. Dick Leon has earned the respect of both Republican and Democratic Members alike.

I have every confidence that Dick is fully prepared for the challenges of being a U.S. District Court Judge. I congratulate him on his new assignment and wish him; his wife, Christina; and their son, Nicholas, all the best.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF BRAVO COMPANY, FIRST BATTALION, TWENTY-THIRD MARINES

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, for more than two centuries, the U.S. Marine Corps has exemplified the highest virtues of loyalty, service, and sacrifice. From the walls of Tunn Tavern during the Revolution to the far reaches of the Pacific, from the jungles of Vietnam to the vast expanse of the Arabian desert, and from the walls of Camp Rhino and the sand of the Kandahar Airport to Guantanamo Bay, America's Marines have shown the world the meaning of "Semper Paratus."

Through the long march of our history, few military organizations have been held in such high esteem as the