

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Executive Calendar No. 310, the nomination of William H. Pryor, Jr., to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Bill Frist, Orrin Hatch, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Craig Thomas, Charles Grassley, John Cornyn, Chuck Hagel, Jim Talent, Richard Shelby, Wayne Allard, Elizabeth Dole, Conrad Burns, Larry Craig, Jeff Sessions, Lindsey Graham, Rick Santorum, and Thad Cochran.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business.

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

JOHN J. HOULIHAN: A LIFETIME OF GIVING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a great man, a compassionate public servant, a decorated war hero and a beloved husband, father and grandfather, John J. Houlihan, who died of lung cancer, Thursday, July 24, in his Palos Heights home surrounded by his loving family.

Born in 1923 on Chicago's South Side to the son of a slaughterhouse worker, John Houlihan graduated from Leo High School in 1941. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of that year, John enlisted in the United States Marines. He was shipped to the South Pacific where he saw action in the Battle of Midway.

On his 21st birthday, during a battle on the South Pacific island of Bougainville, he was hit by enemy artillery fire and lost his left leg. John Houlihan was awarded a Purple Heart, the Marine Corps Medal and the Asian Pacific Medal with 3 Bronze Stars.

He spent the next year and a half in Veterans' Administration hospitals recuperating from his wounds and undergoing physical therapy. During that time, a friend persuaded him to attend a church dance in Chicago. It was at that dance that John met his future wife, Vernal. Together they would raise a wonderful family of eight children.

Even while bouncing on crutches, John taught his children how to swim, ride bikes and hit baseballs. He taught them music and the joys of being a Notre Dame football fan. As his daughter Maureen has said, John's children grew up learning the Notre Dame fight song and the Marine Corps hymn.

After leaving the military, John attended DePaul University, where he studied business and accounting, and began working in the Cook County

Clerk's office. He later worked in the offices of State Treasurers Jerome Cosentino and Pat Quinn.

A loyal Democrat, John was elected to the Illinois General Assembly in 1965 and served 8 years in the State house, representing the 41st District in the Park Forest area. He was also elected as a delegate to several democratic national conventions. While in the legislature, John started insurance and accounting businesses.

Following his service in the General Assembly, John's attention turned to veterans' rights and veterans' services. He became the first director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs when former Governor Dan Walker tapped him to head the fledgling agency. He developed programs for the Veterans' Administration in Washington under former President Jimmy Carter, and most recently was supervisor of the Cook County Veterans Assistance Commission. John spent decades fighting for veterans' rights, winning honors and accolades along the way, including the first-ever Cook County Veterans' Recognition Award in 2000.

Looking over this long list of accomplishments, I think anyone would come to the conclusion that this was a great public servant. But what those of us who knew John will tell you is that he was also a great human being.

Meet John Houlihan just once, the story goes, and he would greet you by name years later. If you were a veteran who needed help, John Houlihan was the man to see. It didn't matter if you were rich or poor, black or white, Democrat or Republican, John Houlihan's door—and his heart—were always open to you.

They say some people are naturals when it comes to politics and public service. Some people have the right temperament, the right personality and the right mix of talents to be a good leader. John certainly had all of those things. But in truth, John had something that distinguished him from the crowd—a passion to help others and to make sure they got a fair shake. A passion for life and a belief that giving of yourself in the service of others was the highest calling.

John Houlihan gave completely of himself on the battlefields in the South Pacific; in the legislative fights on the House floor in Springfield; in VA hospitals and service centers all across Illinois and the rest of the Nation; and every day to his wife and his children and his grandchildren.

Mother Teresa, the late Roman Catholic nun and missionary, once said: "We do no great things—we do only small things with great love." John Houlihan knew that. He showed us with his life. He will be greatly missed.

SINGAPORE SHOULD INCREASE PRESSURE ON BURMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I do not intend to delay consideration of

the U.S.-Singapore free-trade agreement, but I do want to take a moment to highlight a significant step that Singapore can take today to further the cause of freedom in Burma.

It has been reported, by U.N. Special Envoy Razali Ismail and others, that the repressive and illegitimate State Peace and Development Council, SPDC, has assets tucked away in Singapore financial institutions. Given the many illicit activities of the SPDC, one can rightfully question the source of these funds.

Like the United States, Singapore should immediately freeze the SPDC's assets until such time that democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other all democrats are freed from detention and a process of national reconciliation is agreed to and implemented by all parties—the National League for Democracy, ethnic nationalities, and the SPDC.

Such action not only underscores Singapore's commitment to the rule of law throughout the region, but places much needed pressure on the junta in Rangoon to change their oppressive ways.

Southeast Asian countries can no longer ignore the many threats to regional stability posed by the generals in Burma. The situation in Burma should be a matter of concern to all of Burma's neighbors—and the U.N. Security Council.

MAKING IT EASIER FOR BAD APPLE GUN DEALERS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last week I spoke about a report, released by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, that identified a list of 10 "bad apple" gun dealers. According to data released by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives, the dealers cited in the Brady Campaign report were the source of thousands of guns traced to criminal activity. Earlier this week, despite the startling information contained in the Brady report, the House of Representatives included an amendment in the Commerce, Justice, and State Departments appropriations bill which would not only make reports like the Brady Campaign's much more difficult to produce but also might cripple the ability of the ATF to enforce the nation's gun safety laws against firearms dealers who supply guns to criminals.

The House amendment would prohibit the public release of information related to the importation and production of firearms. This means that the only reliable national information available as to how many guns are produced in a given year, as well as type, caliber, and manufacturer, would no longer be available to the public. Further, the amendment would prohibit the public release of information related to multiple handgun sales. Under current law, dealers are required to notify the ATF of the sale of two or more handguns to the same person within 5

business days. Eliminating the availability of this data would make it even more difficult to monitor the activities of reckless gun dealers. In addition, the amendment would prohibit the release of information related to crime-gun tracing requests.

The amendment would also prohibit the ATF from issuing a rule requiring Federal Firearm Licensees to submit to a physical inventory. A physical inventory recently revealed that a Tacoma, WA, gun dealer could not account for the sniper rifle used by the Washington, D.C. area sniper and more than 200 other guns in its inventory. The amendment would also require the immediate destruction of records of approved firearms purchases and transfers generated by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The retention of these records has assisted law enforcement officials in trying to prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals, as well as identifying gun trafficking patterns.

I believe this provision could shield reckless and negligent gun dealers from public scrutiny and weaken the ATF's oversight and enforcement authority. It will hopefully be rejected here in the Senate.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred in Boston, MA. On July 4, 2003, a group of teens attacked a lesbian woman, Lisa Craig, at a Fourth of July fireworks display in Piers Park. Craig, her partner, and her two daughters were picnicking and watching fireworks. The trouble began at the park's playground when a group of teens began shouting homophobic epithets. When Craig asked the groups to leave, she was struck in the head by one of the teens. The attackers continued to punch and kick Craig as she was bleeding on the ground. Given the severity of her head injuries, Craig underwent 2 operations and received over 200 stitches.

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 is 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.

IRAQ

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, for nearly 15 years, our country engaged in a bitter struggle with the tyrannical

regime of Saddam Hussein. We argued, negotiated, debated, and compromised with this brutal dictator, and yet the results were always the same: deception, deceit, and lies. In the meantime, thousands of innocent Iraqis were raped, tortured, or murdered. Some disappeared entirely, never to be seen again. Meanwhile, Iraq's enormous wealth was pilfered and squandered by Saddam's cronies who were more concerned about their collection of foreign sports cars than ensuring the Iraqi people had running water and sufficient electricity.

It is easy to lose sight of how far we have come. As we constantly hear stories of the guerrilla style warfare, of secret Iraqi resistance groups, and the criticism regarding the pace of reconstruction, we forget about the people we have saved or the freedom we have provided. Iraqis are now truly free, and we must remember that.

Change is not instantaneous, particularly when it comes to freeing a people who have been oppressed for over 25 years. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies recently reported, the reconstruction in Iraq will be an enormous task. We cannot and should not expect immediate results: decades of neglect and degradation cannot be overcome by the simple exertion of will. No, rebuilding of Iraq will be a slow and deliberate process. It cannot be rushed, and we must remember that we have only been rebuilding for 11 weeks.

The recommendations from the CSIS report were helpful in identifying those areas that we need to work on. For example, the CSIS team found that public safety remains the primary concern for many Iraqis as well as American commanders and recommends quickly expanding the Iraqi civilian defense forces. Another critical recommendation is finding work for unemployed Iraqis who have far too much time to consider their plight. Realistically, I believe agriculture and construction could provide that employment.

Though we still have a long road ahead, we should also recognize how far we have come. Saddam's brutal dictatorship is no longer in power, and we have taken steps to track down members of his former regime. The recent killing of Saddam's two sons was an important victory, and it appears that it will only be a matter of time before we catch Saddam. The Iraqi people are starting to realize that Saddam is not coming back to power and that freedom is truly theirs.

We have also restored most of the public utilities and improved security. Thousands of Iraqis are joining the country's new civil defense force, which will free up thousands of American troops for other missions. And oil revenue is increasing daily, helping defray the costs of running the country.

Perhaps most significantly, Iraq's governing council has convened and the process of developing a formal structure for governing the country

has begun. We also must not forget that 85 percent of the cities are now governed by local Iraqi leaders.

Despite this amazing progress, some have criticized the administration's approach to Iraq. For example, many have wanted to know when our troops will come home for some time. Unfortunately, the Army was unable to provide a rotation schedule until recently because of ongoing military operations and security concerns.

This concern resonated in my home State as well. In Colorado, we have been awaiting word on when the local soldiers from the 3rd Armored Cavalry based at Fort Carson might return since the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Thankfully, the Army recently announced its unit rotation schedule, which means that if all goes according to plan, many of the units in Iraq, including the 3rd Armored Cavalry, will be home within a year.

This information will bring joy to our troops who have served so valiantly over the last several months. It will also give hope to the many families who had been patiently awaiting for information on when their loved ones might return. We should not forget that without their support and sacrifice, our troops would not be able to function. It is their families who give our troops strength.

This is why I have been working with nonprofit organizations like the Armed Forces Foundation that have been providing support to these families during this prolonged deployment. During the August recess, for example, I will be joining the Armed Forces Foundation in organizing a fishing trip for the children of the soldiers from Fort Carson. While activities like the children's fishing trip cannot replace a mother or father, they can lift the spirits of these families who have sacrificed so much.

Other criticism, however, is completely unjustified at this time. For example, some pushed for cost estimates on our future operations in Iraq, which everyone knows is nearly impossible to predict at this time. Department officials can't look into their crystal ball and pull out the magic number. Future operations in Iraq may cost more than the \$4 billion we are currently spending or they may cost less. We just don't know at this time, and we won't know until Iraq is completely stabilized.

Another criticism centers on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. Almost all of us believed, and many of us still believe, Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. And what happened to these weapons is a legitimate question.

Our forces have not found these weapons yet, but that does not mean they didn't exist or that we won't find them in the future. There are few matters that our intelligence agencies have ever conclusively agreed on. One of those was that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction. Last October's National Intelligence Estimate clearly lays out the intelligence supporting this belief.