

launch, and weather balloons for measuring the winds aloft, to better tell where it would go, and to make the calculations about how high we were able to fly on any particular day.

We invented much. When I started doing rockets, there were not the model rockets available at the hobby shops. We had to have the motors turned out at the local shop, after we designed them for the proper characteristics. It led to a lot of invention.

It also expanded our horizons, as our experiences with rockets translated to our own lives. My friends and I often thought, if we could master the skies and heavens with our rockets, what more would we be able to do in our daily lives? It is an answer we are still developing as we each pursue paths in life—some very far away from rockets.

As we grow older, we all want to make sure our children and our grandchildren have it better than we did. This is one area in which they will not have it better than we did—in fact, may not have it at all—if we fail to act. If we fail to come up with a reasonable compromise on this issue, we will have failed to fuel the dreams of the next generation in a vital field of science by our shortsighted efforts to regulate the fuel of the rockets.

Our children will not be the only ones affected by this provision, however. The impact of this regulation will also be felt by the trucking industry which was recently told that it would be liable for the prevention of the possession of explosives by prohibited persons who are their employees. As some shippers do not currently do extensive background checks on their employees, they have decided to stop shipping the motors, including these rocket motors, at all.

Although some companies will continue to ship rocket motors, they will charge very high hazardous material fees that would hit the consumers in the pocketbook. Small businesses will be hit hard by the fees which will have to be paid by the consumer, and even larger and more successful businesses will be unable to avoid the one-two punch of the permit process and the higher transportation and delivery fees.

Even small businesses in other countries will feel the pinch. I was surprised to receive a call from the president of the United Kingdom's largest model rocket group. He thanked me for my interest in the issue because the U.S. ships most of the model rockets used in the United Kingdom. The supply of model rocket motors in other countries is limited, and their hobby is intricately linked with ours.

To remedy these problems, I introduced S. 724 last week. My bill provides an exemption for permit requirements for the purchase and transport of rocket motors, including those with more than 62.5 grams of APCP.

In section 845 of the Federal explosives law, my bill provides an exemption from explosives permit require-

ments for the components of rocket motors. This exemption is similar to the exemption in the same section enjoyed by antique firearms users for black powder, as black powder also makes the explosives list. The limit there is 50 pounds; quite a bit different than 62.5 grams.

The current language has been tightened up from the original draft to ensure that the exemption is only provided for valid uses. The language specifies that the exemption only applies to nondetonable rocket propellant—a very important word. There are some high-energy APCP composites that have additional chemicals in their composition that make them detonate instead of burning at a moderate rate. These are not used in amateur or sport rocketry and are not exempt under my language.

The APCP my bill refers to, which is found in model rockets, burns but does not explode. In addition, the language in my bill does not exempt rockets that carry various components of weaponry.

On the transportation issue, it appears that some companies are only shipping those articles that are specifically mentioned as exempt from explosives requirements under section 845. My bill provides the exemption for rocket motor components under this section, giving shippers a clear exemption to resume shipping rocket motors.

I have been joined by Senators BENNETT, INHOFE, COLEMAN, CRAPO, BURNS, ALLARD, and SANTORUM in introducing this bill.

Some of my other colleagues have expressed concern that this legislation goes too far. They have questioned me about the possibility of individuals stockpiling APCP to build a bomb.

First, I would contend that the ATF does not appear concerned about this possibility. Under their proposed 62.5-gram exemption, an individual would be able to buy as many rocket motors as they wanted that were under 62.5 grams.

A rocket motor is fairly simple. I ask unanimous consent to show a three-dimensional object on the floor.

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

Mr. ENZI. I have one of those 62.5 gram rocket motors here. This is what is allowed to be bought in as much quantity as you want. But a quarter of an inch bigger than this and you can't have it without \$100 and a special permit. It is very simple, the fuel with the hole through the center. When you buy them, the APCP comes in this chunk that is removable from the rest of the rocket motor parts.

If the ATF considers APCP a dangerous explosive, then their 62.5 gram exemption itself is dangerous. The ATF is basically saying it is OK to buy as many sticks of dynamite as you want, but we won't let you have a whole box. I reiterate that rocket motors compare more to flares than to dynamite. Hundreds of hours are spent constructing these rockets.

A lot of work goes into the rocket body. Nobody wants to blow theirs apart. So they are a safe form of fuel.

Simply put, my legislation is designed to allow another generation to experience the thrills and excitement of model rocketry. It is being introduced to correct a change in the law that Congress never intended. When we voted to take action to prevent the actions of terrorists, we never intended to prevent our children from pursuing projects in science class, hobbyists from pursuing their hobbies, and our families from engaging in father-son or mother-daughter or any mixture of projects that promote learning and the pursuit of the frontiers of space. If you have never been to a rocketry event or seen a rocket launch in person, I urge you to do so if the opportunity ever presents itself. If you have gone to one of those events, you will remember how it left you looking towards the heavens, mindful of your dreams, and feeling encouraged to pursue them.

That is not a bad gift to give our children and theirs. It is extensive throughout the world, I can tell, from the calls I have gotten about this since I got involved in it.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort which will have a great impact on our lives in the years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

TROOPS PHONE HOME FREE ACT OF 2003

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 718, the Troops Phone Home Free Act of 2003; that the only amendment in order be a McCain substitute amendment; further, that there be 1 hour of debate equally divided between Senator MCCAIN and the Democratic leader or his designee; that at the expiration or yielding back of time, the amendment be adopted, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, without intervening action or debate.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 718) to provide a monthly allotment for free telephone calling time to members of the United States armed forces stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

AMENDMENT NO. 434

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that the McCain substitute be adopted at this time for consideration.

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

The amendment (No. 434) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make minor changes in the plan to provide a monthly allotment of free telephone calling time to members of the United States armed forces stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan)

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Troops Phone Home Free Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this Act to support the morale of the brave men and women of the United States armed services stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan (as determined by the Secretary of Defense) by giving them the ability to place calls to their loved ones without expense to them.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The armed services of the United States are the finest in the world.

(2) The members of the armed services are bravely placing their lives in danger to protect the security of the people of the United States and to advance the cause of freedom in Iraq.

(3) Their families and loved ones are making sacrifices at home in support of the members of the armed services abroad.

(4) Telephone contact with family and friends provides significant emotional and psychological support to them and helps to sustain and improve morale.

SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BENEFIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as possible after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall provide, wherever practicable, prepaid phone cards, or an equivalent telecommunications benefit which includes access to telephone service, to members of the armed forces stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan (as determined by the Secretary) to enable them to make telephone calls to family and friends in the United States without cost to the member.

(b) MONTHLY AMOUNT.—The value of the benefit provided by subsection (a) shall not exceed \$40 per month per person.

(c) END OF PROGRAM.—The program established by subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary determines that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended.

(d) FUNDING.

(1) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall maximize the use of existing Department of Defense telecommunications programs and capabilities, private support organizations, private entities offering free or reduced-cost services, and programs to enhance morale and welfare.

(2) USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.—In addition to resources described in paragraph (1) and notwithstanding any limitation on the expenditure or obligation of appropriated amounts, the Secretary may use available funds appropriated to or for the use of the Department of Defense that are not otherwise obligated or expended to carry out this section.

SEC. 5. DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT.

The Secretary of Defense shall work with telecommunications providers to facilitate the deployment of additional telephones for use in calling the United States under this Act as quickly as practicable, consistent

with the availability of resources. Consistent with the timely provision of telecommunications benefits under this Act, the Secretary should carry out this section and section 4 in a manner that allows for competition in the provision of such benefits.

SEC. 6. NO COMPROMISE OF MILITARY MISSION.

The Secretary of Defense shall not take any action under this Act that would compromise the military objectives or mission of the Department of Defense.

Mr. MCCAIN. Just to be clear, at the expiration or yielding back of time, the amendment is adopted, and the bill, as amended, will be read a third time and passed, without intervening action or debate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair.

This legislation, introduced on behalf of Senators ALLEN, CHAMBLISS, LINDSEY GRAHAM, CRAIG, MILLER, and others, would improve the ability of American service personnel fighting overseas to communicate with their loved ones at home. It provides a monthly allotment of free telephone calling time to members of the Armed Forces outside of the United States who are directly supporting or involved in military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan for such period of time as the conflict continues in both areas.

I have discussed this issue with the Department of Defense and at this time they have not gotten back to me. I spoke to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. She supports the idea. There may be some changes proposed by the Department of Defense, but I am confident of their support.

This legislation would direct the Secretary of Defense to provide these troops with the financial ability to call home by providing a prepaid calling card or equivalent telecommunications benefit up to \$40 every month. The bill would also direct the Secretary to work with telecommunications providers to facilitate the deployment of additional telephones for use by our troops. Our military mission must remain a priority of the Department of Defense. Therefore, the bill makes clear that the Secretary shall not take any action to implement the bill that would compromise our overall military objectives. Moreover, the bill gives the Secretary complete discretion on how best to implement it. If it is simply impractical to provide the benefit to certain soldiers, then the Secretary may refrain, obviously, from providing it. If the cost of providing the service to one branch of the military or the other is more costly, then the Secretary can determine the most equitable method of distributing the benefit.

The bill also directs the Secretary to maximize the use of all resources to fulfill the goals of the act and, thus, he may use existing programs, private support programs, or offers from private entities to make telephone service available to our troops. For example, I received a generous offer today from Joseph Wright, CEO of PanAmSat Corporation. In his letter he said:

[This bill] is a terrific idea and I would like to support it. . . . We would be willing to provide satellite services free to support your initiative.

The only intended beneficiaries of this bill are the troops serving this country. It is not intended to benefit any particular provider. Thus the bill urges the Secretary to implement the bill in a manner that is consistent with the timely provision of the benefits but also in a manner that allows for competition in the provision of such benefits.

All of us are aware of the importance of communicating with one's family and friends, particularly when you are in a time of crisis and combat. This is a modest attempt to try and help these men and women who are serving. Some of them have already been there for a very long time. The USS Abraham Lincoln has been at sea in the area for more than 300 days. Communications with their loved ones at home is obviously a very important aspect of preserving family and also communicating with friends as well. Modern technology enables our service personnel to communicate with their loved ones by phone, and these real-time discussions can provide significant emotional and psychological support to both the soldier and the family.

Unfortunately, for some the cost of placing these calls can be prohibitively expensive. On March 18, 2003, USA Today reported on the high cost of telephone calls from bases in Kuwait:

It cost one soldier \$35 to make two quick phone calls home to his wife.

Likewise, my office was recently told the story of a Marine corporal who didn't have enough money to call his son in the States on his birthday.

Last Friday, I asked the country's telephone companies to commit to ensure that families of service personnel don't have their telephone lines disconnected due to a short-term inability to pay the costs incurred for calls from troops overseas. I also asked for a commitment to implement special reduced rates where feasible for telephone calls with members of the Armed Forces overseas.

Madam President, the response has been overwhelming. From the smallest companies serving a few hundred customers to the largest of companies, around 60 companies have agreed to make these commitments. I wish to quote from a few of these letters and I will have many printed in the RECORD at the appropriate time. Some of them are extremely touching, believe it or not.

One that especially got my attention was from the Andrew Telephone Company in Andrew, IA. They will not disconnect service from servicemen's families for the duration of the war. They write:

We don't offer long distance, but we will assist subscribers to find the best rates possible. Andrew is a community of 450 and we have 19 young men and women serving at this time. Yours, Mil Cornelius, President.

Remarkable. Andrew, IA, a community of 450 and they have 19 young men and women serving at this time. That is a very wonderful commitment.

We have commitments from small companies from Andrew Telephone Company to Quest, Southern Bell, SBC, Verizon, AT&T, MCI, Sprint. All the major corporations in America have also made these commitments. I am extremely grateful to them. More importantly, I am sure the service men and women and their families all over America are grateful as well.

Just a couple more: William P. Heaston, vice president of PrairieWave Communications in Sioux Falls, SD, wrote:

I am a retired Army officer, who served in Vietnam and other remote areas. I can assure you that PrairieWave fully appreciates the benefit to morale and military service that the ability to communicate with loved ones brings.

William E. Morrow, CEO of Grande Communications in San Marcos, TX, writes:

We are proud of our troops and know their families are in need of our support during these difficult times. This is the least we can do in light of their great sacrifice for our country.

All of them make statements along those lines.

OmniTel Communications:

We will also be providing cash credits as a donation on the billing, which have yet to be determined, of these families later this year to help defray other costs they may have incurred.

OmniTel Communications supports our Armed Forces in its critical action and wish the very best to all Americans who have to make very serious decisions for the future of our great country.

Ronald Laudner, CEO, OmniTel Communications, Nora Springs, IA.

I appreciate the overwhelming response from the major corporations and the smallest telephone companies in America. Obviously, as I said, the men and women who are serving in harm's way as we speak will also be grateful.

I also want to state the obvious to the men and women serving in the most dire and dangerous situations and cannot make a phone call now. They will be rotated out and they will be in places where they will be able to do so, and those are the ones who I am sure their families will want to hear from urgently.

I thank my colleagues for this bill. It will go to the other body. We will have, I think, a brief period of time for the Department of Defense to make whatever input they would like to have in this legislation. I hope we can pass it as quickly as possible and send it to the President. I thank my friend, Senator ALLEN, and I thank especially Senator CHAMBLISS, who is chairman of our Personnel Subcommittee, who has been very much involved in this issue as well.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a representative

sample of responses I received from telephone companies, large and small, throughout the country, and a list of all of the companies that have responded to my request.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

From: Mil Cornelius [andrtel@netins.net]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 7:06 p.m.
To: Bailey, Bill (Commerce)
Subject: McCain Request

Andrew Telephone Company, Andrew, IA will not disconnect service from Service-men's families for the duration of the war. We do not offer long distance, but will assist subscribers to find the best rates possible.

Andrew is a community of 450, and we have 19 young men and women serving at this time.

Yours,

MILT CORNELIUS,
President.

From: Ronald Laudner Jr.
[rjljr@omnitel.com]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 11:48 a.m.
To: Bailey, Bill (Commerce)
Subject: Senator McCain's Request

MR. BAILEY: Omni Tel Communications will do our best to determine who each of the families are that have given of themselves to defend our country. If we can garner the information on which families are affected, and I might add that with the number of communities we serve and the geographical proximity to several different companies of the armed forces this will be a large task, we will concur with the request made by Senator McCain.

We also will be providing cash credits as a donation on the billing, which have yet to be determined, of these families later this year to help defray other costs they may have incurred.

Omni Tel Communications supports our armed forces in this critical action and wish the very best to all Americans who have to make very serious decisions for the future of our great country.

Sincerely,

RONALD LAUDNER,
*CEO, Omni Tel Communications,
Nora Springs, IA.*

From: Abbott Jr., Herschel L.
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 6:10 p.m.
To: Bailey, Bill (Commerce)

BellSouth is continuing to study the feasibility of implementing customer specific pricing plans to provide discounts for families to communicate with members of the military serving overseas. We will provide an update on the status of these efforts as soon as possible.

I hope this responds to Senator McCain's inquiry.

Kindest regards,

HERSCHEL L. ABBOTT, Jr.

MCI,

Ashburn, VA, March 25, 2003.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAIN: MCI shares your desire to support our military personnel and their families during these difficult times. We also understand how important communications are to our service men and women and their families. On March 21, 2003, MCI reinstated its military personnel collections policy that was last used during the Afghanistan deployment. This policy allows MCI to negotiate very liberal deferred payment ar-

rangements designed to meet the needs of the military members and their families.

MCI is also examining the possibility of special discounts to make it easier for our service personnel to communicate with their loved ones.

MCI is proud to support our troops.

Sincerely,

WAYNE B. HUYARD.

AT&T,

Morristown, NJ, March 24, 2003.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCAIN: Like all Americans, AT&T strongly supports the efforts our Armed Services personnel undertake on our nation's behalf in times of peace and in times of war. That support has evolved into a long tradition at AT&T of close cooperation with the United States government to provide the men and women who serve in our military the best telecommunications services in the world. As I write this letter, AT&T is providing service to sailors, marines, soldiers, and airmen on virtually every major U.S. military base worldwide and on every Navy ship at sea.

That tradition continues as AT&T now steps up to the challenge of providing communications services to our nation's troops deployed in the conflict with Iraq. As part of that effort, earlier this week AT&T announced that it would donate 160,000 prepaid phone cards worth \$3 million to the USO for use by U.S. troops fighting the war with Iraq. This continues AT&T's tradition of donating service dating back to Operation Desert Storm as well as the Balkan conflict.

Today, from United States military bases in Kuwait, service men and women can call home in a number of convenient and cost-effective ways, including through the use of prepaid cards, standard calling cards, commercial credit cards, and collect calling. Special military prepaid card rates, for instance, allow military personnel to call the United States for 22 cents to 30 cents per minute with no surcharge per call. In addition, our special Global Military Saver Plus card, which has been heavily promoted to military personnel, is available at \$0.50 per minute with no per-call surcharge and a monthly fee of only \$1 for each month in which it is used. On a promotional basis, AT&T has also lowered the cost of calling from military bases in Kuwait to the United States using standard calling cards, commercial credit cards, and collect calling to 50 cents per minute with a maximum per call surcharge of \$1.50 and, in some cases, no surcharge at all. Ship-to-shore calling is also available aboard Navy ships at rates of between \$1 and \$3 per minute, reflecting unique cost and capacity issues.

The retail rates for the military prepaid cards and ship-to-shore service are set by the Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and Navy Exchange Command (NEXCOM) based on rates set by AT&T in contracts with both AAFES and NEXCOM. Absent some unforeseen and extraordinary request from AAFES or NEXCOM that would materially increase our infrastructure costs, AT&T will not increase the underlying contractual rates for these services to AAFES and NEXCOM for the remainder of the year and through 2004. This commitment applies for calling from American military bases in the region, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, and from Navy ships engaged in this action. Additionally, for the duration of large scale armed hostilities in Iraq and for a period of 3 months thereafter, AT&T will not increase its special promotional rates for calling from military bases in Kuwait using standard calling cards, commercial credit cards, and collect calling.

AT&T is also working with AAFES to determine service requirements going forward as events play out in the region, especially Iraq. Of course, we do not provide service to U.S. military personnel in Iraq today, and do not know the full circumstances under which we may be called to do so. Whatever the circumstances, however, we will, working with AAFES, use our best efforts to provide the men and women who serve in our military in Iraq with the lowest reasonable calling rates possible.

AT&T is committed to bringing calling services to our troops as quickly as possible in Iraq and elsewhere around the world. As the number of U.S. troops has grown in the Persian Gulf region, AT&T teams have worked around the clock to meet the communications needs of those troops. That work is ahead of schedule, and likely to be expanded under the direction of the U.S. military, which determines equipment deployment plans. As those deployment plans are finalized, we will do all we can to bring service on line with the reliability and quality that consumers rightfully have come to expect from AT&T.

Senator, AT&T is honored to be able to help and support our U.S. troops during the conflict in Iraq. As President of AT&T Consumer Services, the unit of AT&T responsible for providing personal communications services to military service personnel around the world, I can assure you that, in keeping with its finest traditions, AT&T remains dedicated to connecting our troops with the people they love back home.

Best regards,

JOHN POLUMBO,
President and CEO.

TELEPHONE COMPANIES THAT RESPONDED TO
MCCAIN LETTER

Alenco Communications, Inc.
All West Communications
American Discount Telecom
Andrew Telephone Company
AT&T
ATX Communications Inc.
BellSouth
Bentleyville Communications Corp.
Call America
Cbeyond
CC Communications
Choice One
Citizens Telephone Co.
Coastal Communications
Cox Communications
Covad
Cox Communications
Cunningham Telephone Company
Deerfield Farmers Telephone Co.
DFT Communications
EPIK Communications
Eschelon Telecom
Farmers Telephone Company
FairPoint Communications
Focal Communications
GCI
Grande Communications
Green Hill Telephone Companies
Hamilton Telecommunication
Home Telephone Co.
InterBel Telephone
Iowa Telecom
ITC DeltaCom, Inc.
Jefferson Telephone Co.
Jordan-Soldier Telephone Co.
KMC Telecom
LecStar Telecom Inc.
Le-Ru Telephone Company
MCI
Monroe Telephone
New Edge Network, Inc.
New Edge Networks
Nii Communications
Nortex Communications Co.

NW Iowa Telephone Co.
OmniTel Communications
One Eighty
PacWest
Pae Tec
Peace Valley Telephone Company
Pigeon Telephone Co.
Qwest
Prairie Wave
Ritter Communications Holdings, Inc.
Rothsay Telephone Co.
SBC
Sprint
Supra Telecom
Talk America, Inc.
TDS Metrocom
The Rainier Group
TXU Communications
USLEC Communications
VeriSign
Verizon
Walnut Telephone Company
Wilson Telephone Co.
Xspedius Communications.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam President, first, I very much commend Senator MCCAIN for his leadership in introducing this very important, thoughtful, and considerate measure, S. 718. I am proud to be a cosponsor of it with him, Senator CHAMBLISS, and others.

The purpose of this bill is to support the morale of the brave men and women of the U.S. armed services who are stationed outside the United States, directly supporting military operations in Afghanistan or Iraq, by giving them the ability to call their loved ones without an expense to them.

When you look at the findings, they all make very good sense, especially that telephone contact with family and friends provides significant emotional and psychological support to them and helps to sustain and improve morale.

As you read the language of the bill, it all makes great sense as a matter of legislation. To give you an idea how it might have an impact on real people and real lives, and also the lives that have been lost, I will refer to an article today in *The Washington Post*, where a young man from Virginia lost his life. This young man's name is SGT Donald C. May, Jr. His father had fought in Vietnam. Young Mr. May joined the Marines as soon as he graduated from high school at Meadowbrook High School in Chesterfield County, VA. He reenlisted and eventually became a tank commander. His father received two Purple Hearts as a tank commander in Vietnam. Unfortunately, his father died in a boating accident while fishing a few years back.

At any rate, SGT May moved and bounced around for several years. He went to North Carolina, where he met his wife Deborah, and eventually they went off to California where he was stationed. He left in January for the Middle East, and it was then, in January, that his mother last talked to him on the phone. As his mother recalled in this article, he said, "Mom, this is what I have trained for all my life. This is what I am meant to do. I am ready."

He talked a bit later with his wife and he told her that he had decided not to reenlist because he wanted to be home more with his two children, Mariah, almost 7, and Jack, almost 2. His wife Deborah is pregnant with their third child, a son, to be named William. Mrs. May, the mother, said her daughter-in-law was treated twice in the last few days for premature labor. The baby is due in mid-May.

Brenda May's last communication with her son arrived a week ago. It was a letter dated March 3.

So when you think of this story of this brave, courageous hero, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, for our safety, for our freedom, for our security, and to liberate the people of Iraq, what a gift he has given to this country—his life, his future, to be holding his baby boy William, to be with his children as they grow up. That is the greatest gift he could give to this country, and I surely hope the people of Iraq, when liberated, will also get down on their knees and thank God for people of this man's courage.

When you listen to the story of him last talking on the telephone to his mother and wife in January, the last communication in a letter dated March 3, the reality is that was his last communication.

I know that you, Madam President, and all Americans can readily understand how this measure would have had an impact. If he could get to a telephone to actually have his mother, to have his wife, hear his voice and have him hear their voices, to tell him that they love him, for them to tell him how proud they are for what he is doing. Obviously, they would be asking him to stay safe. But there would have been the ending on that telephone call undoubtedly where his mother, his wife, and his children would have said: I love you.

While this measure looks like \$40 a month and a telephone call, in some cases that may be the last contact. That is why this measure is so important, and I commend Senator MCCAIN and all of my colleagues for introducing it. I urge my colleagues to pass it very shortly.

I am also hopeful that later this week we can take up S. 721. This is a measure I have introduced with Senators MCCAIN, CHAMBLISS, GRAHAM OF South Carolina, WARNER, BURNS, MILLER, and STEVENS to expand the combat zone exclusions and to provide tax exclusions to personnel serving in Cuba and the Horn of Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

This legislation will help expand the combat zone tax exclusion to include the period in transit to qualified combat zones and to provide full income tax exclusion to other personnel. The pay for these personnel would not be, with the passage of this bill, subject to Federal or State taxes for any month in which they serve in one of these areas. The legislation also provides tax breaks for individuals serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, the global

war on terrorism, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and the Horn of Africa. If this measure were to pass, the pay for these personnel would not be subject to Federal or State taxes for any month in which they serve in one of these areas.

As a matter of past precedent, in 1995, Congress passed legislation designating Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Macedonia as comprising qualified hazardous duty areas. Military personnel serving there on peacekeeping duties are eligible for the same tax exclusion as personnel serving in combat zones.

I also point out that officers do not receive a full income tax exclusion. Any income above the level of the highest enlisted rank is subject to Federal and State taxes. This makes absolutely no sense to me whatsoever, and I know that Senator CHAMBLISS has another measure that will provide parity between officers serving in the Guard and Reserve.

The other point of this matter is that the pay of personnel in transit to a combat zone is subject to income taxes until they actually cross into the combat zone area.

What we are seeing is some of the ships are steaming at full speed when otherwise not necessary in an effort to give personnel as much tax-excluded income as possible. My view is that as soon as those battleship groups leave the ports, whether it is Wilmington, Norfolk, or San Diego, that is when the combat zone exclusion ought to apply. I think this is a commonsense, equitable matter. I think we should not be having our families back home worried about paying taxes when their brave loved one—whether that may be their husband, wife, son, daughter, mother or father—is leaving home. They should not be having to worry about paying taxes when they are serving, whether they are Reserves, Guard, or active military, in these areas supporting this operation for our security and also to liberate Iraq.

I urge my colleagues to pass S. 718, the Troops Phone Home Free Act of 2003. It is the proper and compassionate thing to do. It also expresses our gratitude and appreciation not just to the troops but the loved ones home who need to have that reassurance and the pleasure of hearing their loved one's voice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Troops Phone Home Free Act introduced by my colleague from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN. This legislation would allow troops who are on the front lines in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom to place phone calls to their loved ones without cost to them or their families. It would provide prepaid phone cards for the soldiers and provide more phones in the Middle East and in Afghanistan so our troops can have more flexibility to communicate with their families.

This is an important measure not only for the morale of our brave men and women who are overseas fighting in a war but also to their families and loved ones who are sacrificing dearly for their country.

There is nobody in this great body that we serve in who has a greater appreciation for a soldier to have the ability to pick up the phone and call his or her family than Senator MCCAIN. I admire and respect him for his service to our country, and I am very pleased to be in support of his bill to make sure that every member of our Armed Forces serving in Iraq today, in Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, has the opportunity to communicate with their families.

We think of our brave men and women and the great job they are doing—which they are and I am so proud of all of them—but we have to also remember they have families back home. They have friends and loved ones here who are making just as big a sacrifice as they are making by serving our country. I think it is only right and fair that we give them as many benefits as we possibly can, and this is simply one more way of saying we appreciate the great work they are doing.

I also rise in support of S. 721, which is Senator ALLEN's bill to extend the combat zone where our men and women are serving. Again, from a Guard and Reserve standpoint, we are calling up these men and women on a much more regular basis today than ever before, and it is extremely important that we show support for all of our men and women serving in combat, active duty, Guard, and Reserve. This provides some equity in the payment to all of those men and women who are serving in combat in any part of the world to which they are called. So I do rise in strong support of Senator ALLEN's bill.

I also rise to introduce legislation, along with my colleagues Senator MCCAIN, Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina as well as Senator ALLEN, that I believe will be a positive step in assisting commanders in the Reserve and the National Guard. The men and women who serve our country in the Reserve and National Guard make up a critical component of an All-Volunteer Force and have chosen to put their lives on the line for the freedom of their families and their country, and we thank them. We continue to be on our knees in prayer for their continued safety and for their families as they serve around the world. The legislation I bring to the floor today represents a small step in recognizing the sacrifices that specifically the commanding officers in the Reserve and the National Guard are making as we speak. This initiative will provide a well-deserved benefit to at least 500 reservists and 1,500 National Guardsmen. Currently, National Guard and Reserve commanders are not entitled to command responsibility pay, even though they serve in a similar capacity to their active duty counterparts. This bill will

allow for an added benefit of \$50 per month for junior officers, \$100 a month for mid-level officers, and \$150 a month for Guard and Reserve senior officers who serve as commanders. This pay will apply whether they are full-time wing commanders of a Reserve component airlift wing or whether they are serving as a commander in an inactive duty training capacity. The purpose of this bill is to create further equity between our active and Reserve components. The amount of money involved is relatively small, but this measure serves as a powerful symbol that we value the contribution and sacrifice of our citizen soldiers stationed around the world serving the United States of America and the cause of freedom.

There is one special story about which I would like to speak very briefly. It is a story on the front page of virtually every major newspaper in America this morning. It is a story about CPT Chris Carter in the United States Army, a young captain from Watkinsville, GA, of whom I am so extremely proud, a story about Captain Carter who risked his life on a bridge over the Euphrates River, which was under siege, a bridge which they were seeking to have explosives removed from so we could take that bridge to make sure our troops ultimately got safely across the bridge. It is a story of CPT Chris Carter who, during the midst of a firefight, saw some innocent civilians, Iraqi civilians, crossing that bridge, coming over to the side he and his troops were on. He saw innocent civilians being caught in that firefight and one man being killed and a woman, an Iraqi woman, bleeding and pleading for help. Captain Carter got off of his vehicle, rushed to the bridge, behind his vehicle so that he could have some cover, until he got behind an iron post on that bridge. After he got behind the iron post on that bridge and under fierce fire coming from the other side, he risked his own life to go to that Iraqi woman and to pull her to safety and secure medication for her and ultimately have her transported to a medical facility where she is being treated.

I am so proud of every one of our men and women who are fighting in Operation Iraqi Freedom today. But it is men and women like Chris Carter of whom I am especially proud. He is not just a great Georgian, he is a great American and a great member of the United States Army.

I had a great conversation with his father this morning. His father obviously is extremely proud of him. He is one of those young men who will be able to take advantage of these benefits we have been talking about here today, Senator MCCAIN, Senator ALLEN, and myself. He is one of the young men who will be able to take that phone card under Senator MCCAIN's bill and call home to his family to tell them exactly what did happen and let them have an opportunity to tell him how very proud of him they are.

Again, I commend Senator MCCAIN. I appreciate very much the strong support of Senator ALLEN and Senator GRAHAM as we introduce these measures to try to make life a little more pleasant for our troops as they are separated from their families, and also to make sure their families have the opportunity to communicate with them, and have the financial resources to continue to provide for their families while they are serving in combat areas so that they can concentrate on doing the job they are sent to do and know that their families are being well taken care of, and know they are going to have the ability to communicate by telephone with their families on a regular basis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I yield such time as she may consume to the Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from Arizona for his initiative.

I ask unanimous consent I be added as a cosponsor of his legislation, the Troops Phone Home Free Act. I think it is a wonderful initiative.

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

Ms. COLLINS. I also commend the Senator from Georgia, who heads the Personnel Subcommittee on the Armed Services Committee, with whom I am very privileged to serve. He brings great leadership to the effort. I am proud to be a member of his subcommittee.

DEATH GRATUITY

Later tonight I am hopeful the Senate will consider legislation, S. 704, which I introduced last week with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, the chairman, Senator JOHN WARNER, and my colleague, Senator JOHN MCCAIN. I recognize the contributions and cosponsorship of Senators BEN NELSON and GEORGE ALLEN. The legislation we have introduced will send an important message to our troops who are engaged in combat, even as we speak, that our Nation is so grateful for their service.

Our bill would raise the amount paid to the families of military personnel killed while on active duty. It would increase it from \$6,000 to \$12,000. This payment, which is known as the death gratuity, would be paid retroactive to September 11, 2001, so that the troops who have been killed in the battle against terrorism would also be eligible for this doubled benefit.

As are all of my colleagues, I am very saddened by the loss of American life in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The young men and women of our military represent the very best our Nation has to offer. They do not join the military for monetary gain nor to have a comfortable lifestyle. They serve our Nation out of a sense of patriotism that should make each and every American proud. The mercy they are showing

even today to Iraqi prisoners of war is testament to the strength of character that is the core of our military values. In many cases, we ask our own troops to take additional risks in order to avoid injuring or killing innocent civilians. That they do this without question or regret speaks well not only of our military but of our Nation.

When the Commander in Chief sends our troops into harm's way, we hope and pray each and every one of them will come back home unharmed. While we know this will not be possible, that knowledge does not lessen our shock and our sadness when we learn of the loss of lives.

My State of Maine has experienced two such losses since the war began. Last Saturday, I attended a memorial mass in Windsor, ME, in honor of the life and sacrifice of CPT Jay Aubin. CPT Jay Aubin and CPL Brian Kennedy, both proud members of the United States Marine Corps, perished in a helicopter crash in the Kuwaiti desert in the very first few days of the conflict. I met with the parents of both these brave marines, both of whom were present at this memorial mass last Saturday. Hundreds of Mainers gathered to pay tribute to the sacrifice of these brave marines and their families.

As I stand on the floor of the Senate, I once again want to assure their families we honor and recognize their service and their sacrifice. When we send a young man or woman into harm's way, our Nation has in return a sacred obligation to them and to their families. We must ensure they go forth with the utter and complete confidence, should the worst happen, should they be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice, that their country will care for their families and honor their service. The death gratuity is a small token, but it assists the grieving families with their immediate financial needs. There are a variety of other programs that provide for longer term support, but in the initial hours and days after a family has endured such a terrible loss, these funds help to alleviate monetary concerns. This benefit is commonly provided within 72 hours to the family of the service member who is killed while on active duty.

The last time the death gratuity was raised was in 1991 during the period of the gulf war when it was doubled from \$3,000 to \$6,000. With more than a decade having passed, it is time for Congress to move forward and increase this sum in recognition of those who are today fighting in Operation Iraqi Freedom and in the war against terrorism. It is the least we can do to honor their sacrifice. I offer this legislation in tribute to the families of those whose loved ones are today engaged in combat in the Persian Gulf. Too often we forget the sacrifices they make so that their loved one, their husband, wife, father, mother, brother, or sister, can serve our Nation. They are asked to accept long deployments and frequent moves

while at the same time providing their loved one with the support they need to do their jobs.

Truly, what these families do is heroic. Passage of this legislation will send a clear and strong message to them that this Congress and this Nation is grateful for their sacrifice. Again, it is my hope we will pass this legislation by unanimous consent later this evening. In the meantime, my thoughts are with our troops as they fight in the battles in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in the war against terrorism, and I pray they will soon return home in victory.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back and we move to consideration of the legislation, S. 718.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 718

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Troops Phone Home Free Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this Act to support the morale of the brave men and women of the United States armed services stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan (as determined by the Secretary of Defense) by giving them the ability to place calls to their loved ones without expense to them.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) The armed services of the United States are the finest in the world.

(2) The members of the armed services are bravely placing their lives in danger to protect the security of the people of the United States and to advance the cause of freedom in Iraq.

(3) Their families and loved ones are making sacrifices at home in support of the members of the armed services abroad.

(4) Telephone contact with family and friends provides significant emotional and psychological support to them and helps to sustain and improve morale.

SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TELECOMMUNICATIONS BENEFIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as possible after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall provide, wherever practicable, prepaid phone cards, or an equivalent telecommunications benefit which includes access to telephone service, to members of the armed forces stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan (as determined by the Secretary)

to enable them to make telephone calls to family and friends in the United States without cost to the member.

(b) MONTHLY AMOUNT.—The value of the benefit provided by subsection (a) shall not exceed \$40 per month per person.

(c) END OF PROGRAM.—The program established by subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary determines that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended.

(d) FUNDING.—

(1) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall maximize the use of existing Department of Defense telecommunications programs and capabilities, private support organizations, private entities offering free or reduced-cost services, and programs to enhance morale and welfare.

(2) USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.—In addition to resources described in paragraph (1) and notwithstanding any limitation on the expenditure or obligation of appropriated amounts, the Secretary may use available funds appropriated to or for the use of the Department of Defense that are not otherwise obligated or expended to carry out this section.

SEC. 5. DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT.

The Secretary of Defense shall work with telecommunications providers to facilitate the deployment of additional telephones for use in calling the United States under this Act as quickly as practicable, consistent with the availability of resources. Consistent with the timely provision of telecommunications benefits under this Act, the Secretary should carry out this section and section 4 in a manner that allows for competition in the provision of such benefits.

SEC. 6. NO COMPROMISE OF MILITARY MISSION.

The Secretary of Defense shall not take any action under this Act that would compromise the military objectives or mission of the Department of Defense.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

PETER ARNETT, TRAITOR

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today to comment on and express outrage over the recent actions and words of journalist Peter Arnett. In fact, I hesitate to even use the term "journalist" when referring to Mr. Arnett.

This word implies a certain degree of objectivity and balance which this man knows absolutely nothing about. "Traitor" is a better word to describe Mr. Arnett.

This past weekend Mr. Arnett appeared on state-controlled Iraqi television. With a uniformed Iraqi anchor translating, Mr. Arnett told the Iraqi people that the American war plan had failed due to their continued resistance and that coalition forces were in the process of drafting new battle plans. To quote Arnett:

Clearly, the American war plans misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces.

Saddam Hussein couldn't have written his script any better.

Clearly, Mr. Arnett has no idea what he is talking about. This is the same man who reported in 1991 during the first gulf war that the United States had blown up a baby milk factory. Military sources confirmed that this target was in fact hit. The fact that Mr. Arnett conveniently left out was that this "baby milk factory" was actually a biological weapons plant.

I will never understand how and why Mr. Arnett always thinks he knows so much more than our military and intelligence officials. I am pretty sure our military leaders on the ground and civilian leaders in the Pentagon, who are briefed around the clock, know a whole heck of a lot more than Mr. Arnett. I hope Mr. Arnett is not getting his info from the same source who told him that U.S. forces used the nerve agent—sarin gas—against villagers in Laos during the Vietnam war.

This story, reported in 1998 by Mr. Arnett, could hold no water and CNN rightly fired Arnett for his reckless words and actions. Now, 6 years after that bogus claim, Peter Arnett has once again found himself in search of employment.

Both National Geographic Explorer and NBC News have fired Arnett for this latest stunt by Peter Arnett on Iraqi-controlled television. I am trying to figure out why these entities even hired him in the first place with his pathetic track record of recent years.

We all firmly believe in the first amendment which protects the freedom of religion, speech, press and assembly. However, no U.S. citizen should be allowed to provide aid, and comfort, through false information, to the enemy during wartime.

Of course the media doesn't mention the word "treason" like many of us have over Mr. Arnett's comments. That would be an indictment of one of their own and a pock on their profession.

Mr. Arnett can apologize all he likes for being a "useful idiot" for Saddam and his barbaric regime, but that's not enough for me and it's certainly not enough for our soldiers and many Americans. I think Mr. Arnett should be met at the border and arrested should he come back to America.

I dare Mr. Arnett to take a good look at our soldiers in uniform and tell them they have failed in this mission and objective.

These men and women embody everything that is great about America and freedom. They come from small towns and big cities. They come from families both rich and poor. They come from all religions and races. The one thing all these Americans have in common is their love for America and freedom.

They love this Nation and cherish its very idea so much that they are willing to sacrifice their own lives to ensure that we can live in a country free of government tyranny like that under which those in Iraq have lived.

This war has lasted almost 13 days. Thus far we have lost about 50 U.S. soldiers and have 17 missing in action.

As I stand here today, our coalition forces are surrounding Baghdad and will bring about the demise of Saddam Hussein and his regime. We will help liberate the Iraqi people from deceit and hopelessness and tyranny.

Mr. Arnett, you need to retire or think about a second career as a fiction writer. I understand you are looking for work and that the socialist, anti-American Daily Mirror in the United Kingdom has already picked you up.

To those news organizations that have already picked up Mr. Arnett, and others that may hire him, I have two things to say: One, you have every right to hire him. Two, we have every right to call your news organization a joke and a sympathizer to traitors.

I believe it is about time we made an example of Mr. Arnett's lies and deceit and let the media know we are watching.

While we are giving the media top access and protection in this war, we must demand that they not hang out to dry our soldiers and Americans. If they do so, there should be consequences.

Some believe freedom of speech is an absolute right and that journalists have the right to say and report anything they want. I, and many others, do not believe this. I do not believe journalists should be allowed to lie and opine and aid our enemies in the time of a war.

There is a line journalists are not meant to cross, and Mr. Arnett crossed this line many years ago, and he continues to do so. It is time we held this man accountable for his actions.

THE SMALL BUSINESS DROUGHT RELIEF ACT OF 2003

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise to thank my colleagues for voting last night in favor of the Small Business Drought Relief Act of 2003. Time is of the essence for disaster victims; small businesses across the country have been waiting 8 months for Congress to take action and force the Small Business Administration to comply with the law and open its disaster loan program to them. They are frustrated, and understandably so.

You see, the SBA doesn't treat all drought victims the same. The agency only helps those small businesses whose income is tied to farming and