

sympathy goes out to his wife and his entire family as they deal with their loss. Corporal Speer was killed when his unit came under enemy fire in the Al Anbar province of Iraq on Friday, April 9, 2004.

Corporal Speer was a rifleman assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Camp Lejeune, NC. He performed his duty to his country admirably and I know his loss will be deeply felt by all those who knew him.

Michael Speer enlisted in the Marines in Davenport, IA, on January 16, 2001. He died a true patriot and it is fitting that we recognize his sacrifice here today.

STAFF SERGEANT CORY BROOKS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Staff Sergeant Cory W. Brooks, a member of the South Dakota National Guard, who died on April 24, 2004, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sergeant Brooks was a member of the 153rd Engineer Battalion, which is based in Winner, SD. He died in a noncombat incident on Saturday.

Answering America's call to the military, Staff Sergeant Brooks joined the National Guard in May of 1989 and served as a combat engineer throughout his 15 years of service.

Born and raised in Phillip, SD, he was remembered as a dedicated athlete and student. Staff Sergeant Brooks' former football coach in high school, Jerry Rhodes said, "He was just like family. He was one of those kids you love to work with. He always did good work. He was a very happy-go-lucky kid." Jerry Rhodes son, Wade, picked his good friend to be the best man at his wedding in 1995. Wade said of Brooks growing up, "I spent more time at their house than I did my own. He was just like a brother to me."

Staff Sergeant Brooks was a very dedicated student and well educated. After excelling at Phillip High School and the University of South Dakota for his undergraduate studies, he went on to obtain his Juris Doctorate from the University of South Dakota.

Staff Sergeant Brooks is the second member of the South Dakota National Guard to be killed in combat since the war in Iraq began. Company A, which includes members from Wagner and Winner, was assigned to the 1st Marine Expedition Headquarters. Their company is responsible for defusing road-side explosives.

Staff Sergeant Brooks served our country and was a model of loyalty and dedication in the preservation of freedom. The thoughts and prayers of my family, as well as our country's, are with his family during this time of mourning. Our thoughts continue to be with all those families who have children, spouses, and other loved ones serving overseas.

Staff Sergeant Brooks led a full life, committed to his family, his Nation, and his community. It was his incred-

ible dedication to helping others that will serve as his greatest legacy. Our Nation is a far better place because of Staff Sergeant Brooks' contributions, and, while his family, friends, and Nation will miss him very much, the best way to honor his life is to remember his commitment to service and his family.

I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my sympathies to the friends and family of Staff Sergeant Brooks. I know that he will always be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

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.

In Davis, CA, on October 26, 2003, a homosexual man in his mid-twenties discovered that his automobile had been drenched with four flats worth of eggs. The damage to his vehicle was estimated at approximately \$4,000 and a gang tag was scrawled on the vehicle. The victim said that he felt his vehicle was targeted because he hangs a gay pride flag outside his home.

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.

HUD'S SECTION 8 VOUCHER REIMBURSEMENT CRISIS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to warn my colleagues about the potential low-income housing crisis that could jeopardize hundreds, if not thousands of people in their States as a result of an irresponsible, punitive, and unnecessarily harsh action taken last week by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For the first time in the 30-year history of the Section 8 Voucher Choice Program, there is the very real possibility that tens of thousands of low-income Americans will lose their housing vouchers this summer and fall and be left with nowhere to turn but homeless shelters and the streets. The mere possibility of this is shocking and it's something my colleagues need to be aware of immediately.

Congress did not intend for this to happen, and the appropriators pushed HUD to make sure it would not happen, but that is the course we are on. And it's all because of HUD's callous indifference to the plight of the most vul-

nerable and this administration's unrelenting drive to destroy the safety net.

Using the most narrow possible interpretation of the appropriations bill, HUD issued a notification on Thursday that would retroactively abandon the long-standing practice of reimbursing public housing agencies for the actual costs of assisting the poor, the disabled, and the elderly through the section 8 voucher program. Instead, the new HUD policy will reimburse them on an inflation factor concocted by HUD's budgeteers that has absolutely no bearing on the actual operating costs of the Section 8 housing voucher program.

As a result, public housing agencies across the country are about to be blindsided by a rule change they did not anticipate and could not have prepared for.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials—NAHRO—is conducting a complete national survey of the potential effects of this change, which should be available later this week. But early analysis is already available, and it is not reassuring. As a result of this change, the association thinks that maybe 60,000 families may be at risk of losing their vouchers in the coming year. 60,000.

The notification does inform public housing agencies that they can appeal the decision by July 15, but offers no information about just how to do that. The notification also points out that HUD may not have any funds by then to adjust reimbursements that were appealed. So, go ahead and send the appeal letter, but just don't expect HUD to do anything about it.

If my colleagues harbor any doubts that this HUD notification will have severe consequences, they need only look at what is happening in Massachusetts now. The State has directed public housing agencies to notify 600 families that their vouchers will be terminated effective June 1 as a result of HUD's abrupt funding change. Barring an 11 hour temporary reprieve, those notices go out tomorrow. And that is just the tip of the iceberg in Massachusetts, some thousands more may be in jeopardy.

The State is being hit now because it must reconcile HUD's funding cuts within its existing fiscal year, which ends June 30, and there is no other way to do that other than withholding assistance from those currency receiving it.

Who are these 600 families? More than 60 percent of them are disabled, a significant portion are elderly, and all are low-income.

They are people like Mr. Milton Servis II. At the age of 15, he was hit by a speeding car while he walked. As a result of the collision, he sustained a serious head injury that has left himself disabled, with impairments of his vision, balance, and ability to walk.

Then, just last year, Mr. Servis II, sustained third degree burns on his hands in the Station Nightclub fire in

Rhode Island. He lost his two best friends there as well, on that horrific and tragic night.

Despite these hardships, he continues to work to lead an independent and dignified life. His only source of income is his monthly \$698 SSI check, but he is able to make ends meet because of his section 8 voucher, which covers \$394 of his \$550 rent.

Because of HUD's abrupt change, he may have to stretch his Social Security check all the more, because he is currently scheduled to receive a termination notice tomorrow, informing him he has 1 month before he is tossed out on the street.

This doesn't have to be this way. People like Milton Servis II, who have struggled hard to overcome misfortunes that few others can relate to, don't need to be terrified by the prospect of homelessness.

It should never have come to this. Last year, when the administration sent its budget to Congress, we didn't believe they were being accurate with the numbers.

As our colleague, Senator MIKULSKI, the ranking member of the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, wrote last week to HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson, "... the fiscal year 2004 appropriations bill provides \$17.6 billion to renew expiring section 8 contracts. This amount was \$1.4 billion above the amount requested by the Administration to renew existing vouchers."

Congress went out of its way to make sure that adequate funding was available to renew all vouchers, even adding an additional \$1.4 billion in these difficult budget times to make sure no one would lose their section 8 voucher. What is HUD done with this money?

But the administration doesn't care what Congress intended with regard to this program. They remain committed to their ideological goal of ending the section 8 voucher program, and shredding the safety net.

Last year, the administration proposed block granting the section 8 program so they could shift more of the responsibility for housing the elderly, the disabled, and the poor onto the State and local governments and reduce Federal spending on this critically important program.

On a bipartisan basis, Congress rejected that radical proposal, because it would have provided fewer resources and contained perverse incentives.

It would have actually rewarded housing agencies for terminating assistance for the poorest citizens and replacing it with assistance to people in less need. These "compassionate conservatives" described this new ability to ignore the truly neediest as a type of "flexibility."

The flexibility to abandon people, I guess.

But despite Congress's complete rejection of the proposal, the administration is not about to concede defeat.

If Congress will not accede to its demand to dismantle the 30-year-old sec-

tion 8 program, HUD will do its best to ruin it administratively. And with this notification, HUD is attempting to do just that.

They can't win the battle of ideas in an open and full debate. So they are trying to win it deviously by simply undermining the program's integrity.

We know a Trojan Horse when we see it.

Here is how they are using it on section 8 vouchers.

First, HUD changes the rules in the middle of the fiscal year so that public housing agencies have to take drastic and truly brutal measures to comply, such as throwing people off public housing.

Then HUD blames the public housing agencies for being mismanaged.

In other words, HUD claims that public housing agencies are at fault for not having budgeted the resources to comply with HUD's unexpected policy change.

HUD has already begun condemning the public housing agencies for not maintaining adequate reserves to offset this most recent HUD-manufactured financial crisis. HUD does this event though it knows that over 800 public housing agencies serving 690,000 people have already depleted their reserves to address other HUD policy changes or funding shortfalls in the past 2 years.

HUD intends to use this funding crisis to claim that public housing agencies can't manage their programs effectively, compassionately, and efficiently.

Once the horror stories start about people losing their vouchers and landlords leaving the program, HUD can then declare the existing program a failure and revive its block grant proposal that Congress has already flatly rejected before.

This is not an academic issue.

Real people are about to suffer for HUD's actions. Many are elderly, many are disabled. They deserve to be treated with respect and compassion, which is in short supply in this administration.

HUD is about to impose these immense hardships on those of our constituents who need our help the most.

The administration may not care that low-income, elderly, and disabled Americans are being needlessly hurt, but this Senate does, and we need to join together to fight these changes before this crisis gets any worse.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute today to one of the world's greatest poets, whose immortal words have universal appeal. This month marks the 440th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth on April 23, 1564. His influence has been so great in our country's cultural tradition that from our earliest days as a Nation the two books most often found in Amer-

ican homes were the Bible and the Complete Works of William Shakespeare. Throughout our history up to the present day, Shakespeare plays have delighted audiences and inspired many.

I do not have the time to detail all of the universal works and contributions to our culture and language provided by this great writer and poet. I do, however, want to highlight today two groups among hundreds across the country that are devoting their time and energy in praise of William Shakespeare.

The first group, I am proud to say is in my home state of Utah—the Utah Shakespearean Festival. This festival is held each year in Cedar City, UT; and is one of the premier festivals of its kind in America. The ideals and dreams that were the embodiment of William Shakespeare are recaptured for audiences who have the privilege of attending. It began as a dream of Fred C. Adams, a young actor with a love of Shakespeare and a desire to produce great theater. It has grown tremendously from its inception in 1959 in which 3,276 spectators were entertained watching *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* to its present-day success in 2003 in which 150,000 ticket-holders viewed 185 performances in 2 landmark theaters.

The economic impact of the festival on Cedar City and the surrounding area is immense. It stands as a monument of success to the traditions of Shakespeare and his plays. In fact, in 2000 the festival was awarded the coveted Tony Award for America's Outstanding Regional Theater, an honor truly deserving and treasured.

The second group I have recently become acquainted with is the American Friends of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust which supports programs to preserve the heritage and properties of Shakespeare in Stratford-Upon-Avon, UK. Many U.S. institutions focus on the theater, but this group, headed by John Chwat in Washington, DC, works with the trustees in Stratford keeping the homes of Shakespeare's birth, Ann Hathaway's Cottage, Mary Arden's house and Hall's croft preserved. With the support of the Newington-Cropsey Foundation, Hastings-on Hudson, they have placed four of eight bronze monuments by Greg Wyatt depicting the text and imagery of Shakespeare's plays—*King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Tempest*—in the "Great Garden" at New Place where Shakespeare spent his last days and wrote *The Tempest*. They also sponsor summer sessions at Stratford for Columbia, Georgetown, and other American universities.

Thank you for this opportunity to salute both the Utah Shakespearean Festival and its officials, sponsors, workers, and visitors as well as the board of directors of the American Friends of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the distinguished trustees in Stratford-Upon-Avon passionately working to