

Also, there may be some seniors who prefer specific name brands or generic drugs, and they may want to choose a card from that manufacturer. Missouri has a combined total of 43 individual drug cards. This includes 36 national drug cards, 4 regional cards, and 3 Medicare Advantage exclusive cards. With all these choices, seniors can choose which card is best for their particular health care needs.

The cards are completely voluntary, so those seniors who don't want a card don't have to have one. But for those seniors who choose to take advantage of the drug discounts, I look forward to helping them get started and putting them in touch with people and resources to help them make informed decisions.

Beginning today, 1-800-Medicare will be staffed with 1,400 operators around the clock to field questions about which discount card is best for that particular senior. Or folks can go online at www.Medicare.gov and search prescription drug and other assistance programs to prepare for the May 3 enrollment.

There is much to be excited about, and I am pleased to support this benefit to help our Greatest Generation live longer, healthier lives.

I also thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership on the Medicare law, and recognize his hard work to build strong bipartisan support for this legislation to help America's seniors.

TRIBUTE TO SLAIN CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, three law enforcement officers in the State of California have been murdered in the past three weeks in gang-related slayings. And a fourth was killed in February.

I come to the floor to pay tribute to these brave officers and discuss the perils police face every day, especially from gang members armed with high-powered assault weapons and other guns.

Late Saturday night, April 10, one of San Francisco's finest young police officers, Officer Isaac Espinoza, was shot and killed.

Officer Espinoza was gunned down with an assault weapon, an AK-47, taking three shots in the back as the gunman fired 15 rounds in just seconds. Officer Espinoza and his partner, who was also shot, had no time to seek refuge. The suspect in the shootings is a known gang member.

Officer Espinoza, at 29 years of age, was a distinguished police officer, one of the Department's bright young stars who worked in one of the City's toughest areas.

In fact, Officer Espinoza received three major service awards in his eight years with the Department including: the Silver Medal of Valor for his bravery in a shoot-out that occurred on October, 20, 2000; the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in a foot pursuit as he

and his partner attempted to make a drug arrest on May 5, 2002; and the Police Commission Commendation for his work to reduce crime in the Bayview neighborhood.

He was also recognized as Patrol Officer of the Month by the Captain of the Bayview Police Station in June 2003.

Officer Espinoza also served as a new board member of the Police Officers Association. He was Assistant Commissioner of the softball league. And he planned to take the next Sergeant's exam.

His death is a great loss to the Department and to the City. It is a particularly great loss to his wife and 3-year-old daughter.

On April 15, Merced Police Officer Stephan Gray was shot and killed when a suspect he was chasing on foot turned around and fired two bullets into his chest.

Officer Gray, 34 years of age, worked in the Merced Police Department's gang violence unit, working with some of his community's most dangerous offenders. In fact, the suspect in his killing is a gang member with whom he is believed to have had previous encounters.

Officer Gray had served with the Merced Police Department for seven years. And in those seven years of service, he earned the admiration of his colleagues and once received a commendation for resuscitating an 11-month old baby.

Being a police officer was not just a job for Officer Gray, it was a way for him to change the world. He not only patrolled the streets, but he went out and got to know the neighborhood children in the communities he served. He shot baskets with the kids and, drawing on his days as a high school track star, taught them how to sprint.

He was admired by his friends and neighbors for his loyalty to the police department, but also his devotion to his family.

Officer Gray was a true pillar of his community. He is survived by his wife and three children, ages 13, 5, and 3.

California Highway Patrol Officer Thomas Steiner, 35 years old, was murdered April 21 in a drive-by shooting in broad daylight. Officer Steiner had just walked out of the Pomona courthouse after testifying on a series of traffic cases when a 16-year-old shot him three times with a handgun, hitting him once in the head.

According to Pomona Police Chief James Lewis, the teenager charged with the shooting did not know Officer Steiner, but was merely intent on "killing a cop."

Apparently, the 16-year-old wanted to kill a cop in an attempt to prove himself to a Pomona street gang.

Officer Steiner had been a member of the California Highway Patrol since 1999. His colleagues described him as a positive influence on the police force, the kind of guy who never had anything bad to say about anyone.

On top of being a well-respected cop, he was an excellent marksman and an

avid sports fan. Officer Steiner is survived by his wife, his 13-year-old stepson, and his three-year old son.

These three killings occurred in an 11-day period in April. They are but the latest deaths to report.

Two months ago, Los Angeles Police Officer Ricardo Lizzaraga was killed while responding to a domestic violence call.

At the apartment where the call originated, Officer Lizzaraga confronted a man. Within seconds, the individual drew a gun and shot Lizzaraga twice in the back as he and his fellow officers fled from the apartment. The suspect in the shooting was a known gang member.

Officer Lizzaraga, 31, had served two-and-a half years on the force. In that time, he quickly became a well-respected police officer known for his strong work ethic and great attention to detail.

He was viewed as a gentle giant by his colleagues, friends and family. Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton described him as the "face of Los Angeles."

Officer Lizzaraga is survived by his wife Joyce.

These stories are chilling. They remind us that even those charged with protecting us are vulnerable. They reveal a segment of society that is utterly lawless, unbound by any code of decency.

And sadly, they are just a few of the stories that we will tell this year of cops being killed in the line of duty.

These tragic deaths are sure to continue because we have not done enough to stem the availability of guns nor curb the viciousness of gangs.

This body knows well that the assault weapons ban is on the verge of expiration. However, what this Congress has failed to recognize is that if we allow assault weapons to be more freely available, law enforcement officers will be in even greater danger.

Around 70 officers are killed each year by criminals. And, according to a study by the Violence Policy Center, 1 in 5 law enforcement officers killed between 1998 and 2001 were shot with assault weapons. Now, police officers in San Francisco and other cities are exploring whether to equip officers with military-style assault rifles and Kevlar-plated vests.

And that's why nearly every law enforcement organization in the country supports renewing the ban on assault weapons—they know that the lives of their officers are at risk.

The expiration of the ban would mean that assault weapons like the one used to kill Officer Isaac Espinoza will be easier to obtain whether at the nearest gun shop, sporting goods store or in someone's home.

The easier it is for criminals to get their hands on these weapons, the easier it will be for them to terrorize communities.

To honor the many law enforcement officers who have given their lives in

service to their communities, we must renew the assault weapons ban before it expires on September 13.

But there is much more that we need to do to make communities and cops safer in America. In particular, we must check the rampant gang violence that plagues our city streets and, increasingly, our suburbs and rural communities.

Gang violence used to be a local problem, demanding local solutions. But over the last 12 years, since I have been in the Senate, I have seen this problem spread from isolated neighborhoods to communities across this country.

Gangs have become more sophisticated and more violent criminal enterprises. What were once loosely-organized groups centered around dealing drugs within a particular neighborhood are now complex criminal organizations whose activities include weapons trafficking, gambling, smuggling, robbery, and, of course, homicide.

In 2002, over half of the 1,228 homicides committed in Los Angeles County were gang-related. Similarly, over half of the 499 murders committed in the city of Los Angeles during 2003 were the result of gang violence.

The reach of gangs, however, extends far beyond Southern California.

In fact, Los Angeles serves as a "source city" whose gang members migrate to other communities across the country and set up new criminal entities. One such operation, the L.A.-based 18th Street Gang, is known to have initiated gang activities all over California, in Southwest border and Pacific Northwest states, and in East Coast states including New Jersey and New York.

Today's gangs are more sophisticated, more violent, and more numerous than they were 12 years ago. And that is why we need a strong federal response.

I have introduced legislation with Senator HATCH that will give law enforcement and local communities the tools to deal with gang violence.

Our legislation: Creates new federal crimes to enable prosecutors to target violent gang members; makes changes to current law to allow for effective prosecution for violent street gang crimes; authorizes \$650 million for law enforcement and community groups for suppression, prevention, and intervention programs.

This bill gives us an opportunity to do something about the gang violence that beleaguers our communities and endangers our cops. We owe it to these fine officers who were killed so viciously to do what we can to prevent more violence by gangs.

If we fail to act on both these measures, I am sad to say that I will be back here before long telling the story of some other fine law enforcement officer who is patrolling the streets of one of our communities right now. We must do everything possible to prevent these killings from happening over and over again.

MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Sunday, April 25, the March for Women's Lives took place here in Washington. Its organizers estimated that more than a million men, women, and children from more than 57 countries gathered under the banner of reproductive rights, health, and justice for all women. Participants called on Congress and the administration not only to protect the right to choose but also to protect and promote family planning, maternal and child health care, and the empowerment of women in the United States and abroad.

An op-ed by Werner Fornos, president of the Population Institute, appeared that same day in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The piece was entitled "March is About More than Abortion," and it explained that the marchers' concerns went beyond the issue of abortion to include concerns about HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, the President's imposition of a global gag rule on family planning providers, and the administration's refusal to release funds to the United Nations Population Fund to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies that can lead to abortion.

I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Fornos' article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Apr. 25, 2004]

MARCH IS ABOUT MORE THAN ABORTION (By Werner Fornos)

Passing a barbershop window in Juneau, Alaska, the other day, I spotted a placard inviting locals to join a rally in Washington, D.C., today that could have significant implications for the November presidential and congressional elections.

If people from as far away as our country's northwestern-most state converge upon the nation's capital in sufficient numbers—say, a quarter of a million and upwards—it might be time for President Bush and his political guru, Karl Rove, to unbutton their collars and reach for the hyperventilation bags. The performance of the Bush administration on women's rights may be judged more by the turnout for this event than by any poll or survey.

The purpose of the March for Women's Lives is to deliver to our national leaders a strong, unequivocal message of support for reproductive health and rights and justice for all women.

There are concerns well beyond those of hard-core feminists that Bush administration policies are unduly influenced by right-wing religious zealots and the Vatican, who oppose modern contraceptives as well as abortion.

Much of this rising tide of reaction emanates from pro-choice advocates infuriated by the refusal of the White House and a Republican majority in Congress to acknowledge federal law pronouncing abortion as a matter between a woman, her conscience and her physician. But the march is about more than the termination of pregnancies.

For example, a fact sheet about condoms was removed from the National Institutes of Health Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site and replaced with a document emphasizing condom failure and the effectiveness of abstinence.

No one is suggesting that condom failure should be ignored, or that there is anything wrong with promoting abstinence. The fact remains, however, that the condom, in addition to being a method of preventing unintended pregnancy, is the most effective defense against HIV/AIDS for sexually active individuals.

In a world where 10 more people are infected with HIV every minute, where half of the 40 million people already infected are women, where HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among African-American women ages 25 to 34 and the seventh leading cause of death for white American women that age, it is patently inexcusable to omit the condom option from what should be the nation's most trusted source of medical information.

To explain the removal of the condom fact sheet, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy offered the flimsy excuse that the CDC "routinely takes information off its Web site and replaces it with more up-to-date information." Updating the Web site is understandable, expunging the role of the condom in preventing HIV is simply indefensible.

If the Bush administration routinely ignores the reproductive rights and health of women in the United States, it is hardly surprising that respected international family planning nongovernmental organizations give the White House and U.S. congressional leadership low marks on their concern for poor women around the world.

Within an hour or two after taking the oath of office, President Bush signed the global gag rule, a policy to deny U.S. funds to overseas family planning organizations that provide, perform or counsel women on abortion. In the United States, this would be a flagrant violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of speech. But the Bush administration, while robustly promoting democratization worldwide, does not hesitate to penalize the world's poorest women by withholding this right from family planning providers overseas.

Then, too, the White House remains adamant in its refusal to release a \$34 million appropriation by Congress to the United Nations Population Fund, the largest multilateral provider of family planning and reproductive health services to women in more than 140 developing countries.

Ironically, the combined impact of the Bush administration's global gag rule and its refusal to release the congressional appropriation for the U.N. agency has led to thousands of abortions resulting from pregnancies to poor women worldwide who have been denied access to family planning information, education and supplies.

There is ample evidence that the availability of condoms and other medically approved family planning methods already has prevented substantially more abortions than the Bush administration's policies have, can, or could. The women who will march in Washington today understand the calculus of reproductive health and family planning denial, even if many of our national leaders do not.

Werner Fornos is president of the Population Institute and the 2003 United Nations Population laureate.

HONORING FORMATION OF GLASS CAUCUS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, one of the many strengths of the Senate community is our diverse workforce. It is that diversity that contributes to a more informed and representative government.