

and expansion of the responsibilities of the States to oversee the programs.

I look forward to the many wonderful local school-farm partnerships that will be possible under my new farm-to-cafeteria grant program as authorized by this bill. Communities all across our Nation are beginning to explore the benefits of linking local farms and school cafeterias. When these connections are made, children get healthier fresh food choices at school, and hands-on knowledge about where their food comes from and how it is produced. And farmers not only strengthen their local markets but become more involved with the schools in their community. With just a little seed money and some technical assistance these schools can create a program that teaches children about good nutrition, shows them the importance of agriculture, and supports local farms by keeping food dollars within the community. Under this new program, communities will be able to apply for competitive grants from USDA for up to \$100,000 to purchase adequate equipment to store and prepare fresh foods, to develop food procurement relationships with nearby farmers, to plan seasonal menus and promotional materials, and to develop hands-on nutrition education related to agriculture. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I will now work to secure funding for this important new program.

My support for these new farm-to-cafeteria projects comes in part from the amazing successes demonstrated by the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, FMNP. Years ago, I helped create this program, which provides vouchers to WIC families good for fruits and vegetables at the local farmers market. The effects of this program have been stunning, and I am very pleased that under that this bill the WIC FMNP voucher has been increased from \$20 to \$30 and that we have reduced the cost to States of administering the program.

These provisions and more mean that millions of children and their families will be better served by the Federal child nutrition programs. Though I wish we could have had more resources to do some of the other things we had considered, like expand access to the child care and summer programs in rural areas, provide mandatory funds for nutrition education, and eliminate the reduced price meal category, I support the package of reforms that we have before us and I pledge to keep working on the rest.

In particular, I will continue to work with my colleagues in the Senate to address the growing crisis of childhood obesity in America and the ready availability of junk foods in our schools and cafeterias. With more and more of our children suffering the health consequences of being overweight and obese, we have a responsibility to help them make smarter nutrition choices. But with all of the funds that Congress

rightly appropriates each year for nutrition education and healthy school lunches and meals, our Nation's efforts are severely undermined when children have to walk through a gauntlet of vending machines offering unhealthy choices on the way to the cafeteria. We need to put limits on the availability of junk foods in our schools, to ensure that students are not substituting empty calorie sodas and snacks for their nutritious federally subsidized school meals. Though this measure's establishment of local wellness policies is a step in the right direction, I am concerned that we have sidestepped our responsibility to the health of our Nation's children yet again and I am hopeful that we will revisit this issue in the near future.

Once again, I thank Chairman COCHRAN and Senator HARKIN for their leadership on this important legislation, and I am pleased to express my strong support for its final passage.

DEPARTURE OF TAIWAN REPRESENTATIVE C. J. CHEN

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, a good friend of ours, Ambassador C. J. (Chien-Jen) Chen, will soon be leaving Washington, DC, after having served for nearly 4 years as Taiwan's principal representative. We are going to miss him very much.

C. J. brought a wealth of experience to his job. He was first assigned to Washington, DC in 1971, and he spent most of his distinguished 37-year career promoting good relations between Taiwan and the United States. Over the years, he won many friends for himself and for his country. An eloquent speaker and polished diplomat, C. J. also has a reputation for being a "straight shooter." He was always prepared to provide an informed, balanced, and fair opinion on the complex relationship between Taiwan and the United States as well as the broad range of political, economic, cultural and other issues of common interest to our two countries.

Owing in large part to his efforts, much progress has been made on these issues. During his most recent assignment in Washington, with U.S. support, Taiwan has acceded to the World Trade Organization and become our eighth largest trading partner. At the same time, Taiwan has also contributed greatly to U.S.-led international humanitarian efforts in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and it has cooperated with the United States in fighting proliferation, terrorism, and money laundering in Asia. All these matters required intensive communication and coordination, and we were lucky to have someone like C. J. in place to lead the way.

One of the most notable and likeable things about C. J. is his inexhaustible optimism. While the U.S.-Taiwan relationship has certainly experienced its fair share of twists and turns, ups and downs, as C. J. will surely attest, he has always remained consistently up-

beat. His confidence is contagious, and I agree wholeheartedly with his observation, that Taiwan and the United States, united by shared values and common interests, will continue to work closely together, not only for their mutual benefit but also for the sake of lasting peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific.

Now, after having served as his chief representative in the United States, as his country's foreign minister, as member of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, and as a university professor, this man of extraordinary talent and vision is leaving Washington, DC. While he will be sorely missed, I am certain that he has established an admirable legacy of friendship, trust, and cooperation that will long endure.

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.

On September 19, 1999, a group of men shouting anti-homosexual slurs assaulted five gay men.

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.

OREGON VETERAN HERO

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today I rise to honor a WWII veteran who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in his service to the United States and to the State of Oregon. Bob Maxwell was born in Boise, ID on October 26, 1920. Before joining the U.S. Army, Bob worked as a logger in Colorado. In the summer of 1942, he was shipped to Camp Roberts, CA for training.

Bob boarded a British troop ship heading for the European theater and landed in Casablanca in February of 1943. There he was assigned to the battered 3rd Infantry Division. Together with the 3rd Rangers, his Division landed in Licata on the south-central coast of Sicily in July of 1943. Fighting their way inland, Bob Maxwell's division successfully captured the city of Agrigento after seven intense days of battle.

Bob's dedication to the war effort was a valiant one. After landing near the town of Netuno, Italy on January 22, 1944, he was struck by shrapnel from a German artillery shell, severely injuring his leg. Maxwell returned to his duty repairing phone wires and working the switchboard after bandaging

his leg. He did not go to the hospital until the next morning when his platoon leader forced him to go. He was later awarded the Silver Star for his efforts.

A few months later, stationed near Besancon, France, Maxwell and three other soldiers, armed only with .45 caliber automatic pistols, defended their battalion observation post against a nearly overwhelming attack by enemy infantrymen. Despite fire from automatic weapons and grenade launchers, the men aggressively fought off advancing enemy troops and, with his calmness, tenacity, and fortitude, Maxwell inspired his fellows to continue the struggle. When an enemy hand grenade was thrown in the midst of his squad, Maxwell unhesitatingly threw himself squarely upon it, using his blanket and his unprotected body to absorb the full force of the explosion.

For this action, Maxwell was awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award. In addition, while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry of the United States Army, he was awarded two Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars, and a Bronze Star. Maxwell was honorably discharged from military service at Ft. Lewis, Washington June 13, 1945.

After moving to Oregon, Maxwell met his wife Beatrice—Bea—and they married on August 12, 1951. He and Bea are parents to four children, numerous grandchildren, and a great-grandchild. Bob spent 30 years further serving the public in the teaching profession.

For his selfless service to others, and to the United States in times of war, I salute Bob Maxwell as an Oregon Veteran Hero.

SALUTE TO AN OREGON SOLDIER

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today I rise to honor a courageous Oregonian who rushed to save the life of a wounded Taliban fighter. Sergeant Dan Trackwell, a native of Klamath Falls, OR, and a member of the Combined Anti-Armor Team, is currently serving in Afghanistan helping to secure that country's future.

On June 13, 2004, Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 6th Marines and Afghan Militia Forces engaged three enemy soldiers on a mountain side. The guerillas were tracking and reporting on the Battalion Landing Team's activities when coalition forces opened fire and wounded at least one of them.

The Marines used a high-powered optical sight to observe the enemy fighters and to confirm that one was indeed wounded. As the other Taliban fighters escaped into the mountains the wounded man was left for dead.

Sergeant Dan Trackwell was one of the four Marines who ventured up the mountain to find the enemy. They located him hiding behind a rock. He and Corporal Jesse Clingan, of Unitown, Pennsylvania, determined that the fighter had lost a lot of blood and appeared to be in severe pain.

Corporal Daniel Dimaso, of Junction, NY, stripped off his own t-shirt and made a tourniquet to control the bleeding from the gunshot wound on the enemy fighter's lower left leg, while Pvt. 1st Class Daniel Fondonella, of Mt. Vernon, NY, provided security. Two hours earlier these men were hunting him down and now they were hurrying to save his life.

The Marines knew that the Taliban fighter would die if they did not get him off the mountain. They gathered the injured man and signaled for the corpsman at the vehicles in the canyon to prepare for their arrival. Sergeant Trackwell carried the enemy soldier down the mountain.

The wounded man was then taken to the battalion's command post, where the surgeon, Navy Lt. Brendon Drew, determined that he needed surgery soon. The Marines were instructed to keep an eye on the patient to ensure that he did not fall asleep while the wound was being worked on. As the surgeons worked on the patient, the Marines took turns holding the man's IV bag and blocking the bright Afghan sun from his eyes.

After the patient was stabilized he was taken to a nearby military medical facility for recovery. Lt. Drew determined that it was the immediate medical attention and the quick intervention from the corpsman that saved the man's life.

This story shows us that our Marines not only follow the rules of combat, they display a deep respect for humanity. For his selfless services to others, and to the United States in time of war, I salute Sergeant Dan Trackwell.

ABSENCE EXPLANATION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I regret that I was unable to participate in many of the important votes that took place on Wednesday, June 23, 2004. I was necessarily absent from the Senate yesterday as I was attending the funeral of a family member. Nevertheless, I believe it is important for my constituents in Kansas to know how I would have voted had I been here; thus, I indicated to the Majority Leader my position for each of the votes throughout the day.

TRIBUTE TO MATTIE STEPANEK

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask the United States Senate to join me in tribute to Mattie Stepanek, a young man who accomplished so much, and sadly, was taken from us this past Tuesday, June 22 at the age of 13 years. Like his three older siblings, Mattie died from complications of a rare form of muscular dystrophy.

As anyone can testify who has seen Mattie on television, he was one brilliant person, and he had a big heart to match. At the age of three, he began writing poetry to cope with the death of his brother, writing messages of hope and inspiration, and selling mil-

lions of books. Mattie quickly became one of the most widely read poets in recent memory, and three of his volumes were on the New York Times' best-seller list.

I would like to share one of Mattie's most inspirational poems. It is titled, "On Being a Champion."

"A champion is a winner,
A hero . . .
Someone who never gives up
Even when the going gets rough.
A champion is a member of
A winning team . . .
Someone who overcomes challenges
Even when it requires creative solutions
A champion is an optimist,
A hopeful spirit . . .
Someone who plays the game,
Even when the game is called life . . .
Especially when the game is called life.
There can be a champion in each of us,
If we live as a winner,
If we live as a member of the team,
If we live with a hopeful spirit,
For life."

Mattie was a champion in every sense of the word and his poetry won the hearts of many admirers, from Oprah Winfrey to former President Carter. But famous or not, it seemed to matter little to Mattie, who said, "It's our inner beauty, our message, the songs in our hearts."

Mattie embodied the unlimited potential within all of us, and I hope that Mattie's mother, Judi Stepanek, will find some strength in knowing that Mattie inspired and touched so many people. We offer Judi a special place in our hearts, knowing there is nothing harder than losing a child. And we pray that she be given the strength, courage and wisdom needed to get through this difficult time.

Mattie believed his mission in life was to "spread peace in the world." And, today, I say to Mattie and to all who loved him: Mission accomplished.

AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2004

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator CONRAD, in introducing legislation that provides much needed relief to farmers and ranchers who have been devastated by weather conditions.

Farmers and ranchers from my state began the year with great optimism. Producers were eager to get their crop in the ground so they could get a good return on their investments and their hard work.

But, harsh weather conditions have plagued our state. In some regions of North Dakota, late snow followed by unusually high rainfall left much of our fields under water and unfit to plant. Preliminary reports estimate that as much as two million acres of crops were unable to be planted or had crops that were destroyed after planting. This has placed the livelihood of many North Dakota producers in serious jeopardy.

In the southwest portion of the state, the drought conditions have crippled