

livestock producers. Southwest North Dakota is terribly dry and has been for nearly two years. They have received almost no rain, making haying and grazing land very hard to come by, and causing feed expenses to soar.

These family farmers and ranchers ought not have to bear this burden alone. I am very pleased to join Senator CONRAD in introducing disaster legislation to help ease the financial burden of producers in their time of need. We need quick action on this legislation because producers need help, and they need it now.

The legislation being introduced today is very straightforward and almost identical to disaster legislation enacted in previous years, including last year.

Farmers experiencing crop loss of higher than 35 percent would be eligible for disaster assistance. Folks who bought crop insurance would be eligible for payments equal to 50 percent of the crop price, and those who did not purchase insurance would be eligible for payments equal to 40 percent of the crop price. Under this legislation, the uninsured producers will be required to purchase crop insurance for the following two years in order to receive any disaster assistance.

Also, ranchers suffering grazing losses will be eligible for assistance to help pay for the cost of feed. To be eligible, they must have suffered 40 percent loss during three consecutive months.

The weather conditions, beyond human control, have placed the livelihood of our farmers and ranchers at risk and I urge Congress to act quickly.

20 LEGISLATIVE DAYS AND COUNTING DOWN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, as of today there are 20 legislative days left before the assault weapons ban expires. And as we get closer and closer to September 13, there are reports that gun manufacturers across the country are gearing up to flood the market with previously banned assault weapons. These weapons, according to the law enforcement community, were the weapons of choice for criminals before the ban and they have no place on our streets. The assault weapons ban is straightforward, commonsense public safety legislation that needs to be extended.

In addition to banning 19 specific weapons, the ban makes it illegal to "manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic" firearm that can accept a detachable magazine and has more than one of several specific military features, such as folding/telescoping stocks, protruding pistol grips, bayonet mounts, threaded muzzles or flash suppressors, barrel shrouds, or grenade launchers. These weapons are dangerous and they should not be on America's streets.

In response to Congress' inaction, some State legislatures have begun

taking action of their own. In Massachusetts, State legislators voted Wednesday to bar the sale of the same 19 specific weapons mentioned in the Federal ban. According to the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Massachusetts is now one of six States with its own ban. Seven other States are considering enacting their own bans.

The National Rifle Association has said that the ban is ineffective and unnecessary. The association asserts that guns labeled as assault weapons are rarely used in violent crimes, and that many people use them for hunting and target shooting. But this assertion is not supported by the facts. According to statistics reported by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, from 1990 to 1994, assault weapons named in the ban constituted 4.82 percent of guns traced in criminal investigations. However, since the ban's enactment, these assault weapons have made up only 1.61 percent of the crime-related guns traced.

Unfortunately, despite Senate passage of a bipartisan amendment that would have extended the ban, it appears that this important gun safety law will be allowed to expire. The House Republican leadership opposes reauthorizing the law and President Bush, though he has said he supports it, has done little to help keep the law alive.

I am hopeful that the Congress will act in the 20 days it has remaining.

THE DECISION TO GO TO WAR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month Americans across this Nation celebrated Memorial Day. It was a day that had special significance for millions of World War II veterans, tens of thousands of whom came to Washington to see the long awaited memorial on the Mall to honor them and the more than 10 million American veterans of that war who are no longer living.

This Memorial Day was also an opportunity to reflect for those of us too young to remember that war, but old enough to have parents or friends who fought, died, or in so many other ways sacrificed and labored together to defeat enemies that threatened the survival of the free world.

For me, it was a day of mixed emotions. It was uplifting for Marcelle and me to be on the Mall and to see so many World War Two veterans and their families together, many of them reuniting with members of their divisions or regiments for the first time in over half a century. It was extraordinarily moving to hear their stories of the war, told as if it were yesterday—stories of bone chilling fear, incredible suffering, and awe inspiring bravery.

It was also a somber occasion. I think each of us was reminded of how much we, and so many millions of people in countries around the world, owe to that generation of Americans.

There was much talk of D-Day, and the thousands of Americans who died

on the beaches that first day of the invasion of Normandy. Having returned from Normandy for the 60th anniversary of D-Day, I can say that the feeling is similar to what one experiences when visiting Gettysburg or any of the great battlefields of the Civil War. It is difficult to fathom that so many men so young could face death with such undaunted courage.

It was my second visit to Normandy. I was last there for the 50th anniversary, and the sight of those rows, and rows, and rows of white crosses was every bit as moving this time as it was the last.

Three weeks ago I also attended the funeral of one of two young Vermonters who were killed in action in Iraq on May 25. Sgt. Kevin Sheehan and Spec. Alan Bean died when their base on the outskirts of Baghdad was attacked. Six other Vermonters were injured, three seriously. Sgt. Sheehan and Spec. Bean were the ninth and tenth Vermonters to die in Iraq.

Then on June 7, another Vermonter, Sgt. Jamie Gray, was killed and two members of his Battalion were injured when their vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. He was the eleventh Vermonter to die in Iraq. At his funeral, I thought how the past few weeks have been very sad ones in my State; but, of course, the same could be said for many other states.

As of today, 844 Americans have died in Iraq since the start of the war, and there are thousands more who we rarely hear of who have been wounded. They have lost legs, arms, their eyesight, or suffered other grievous injuries that will plague them for the rest of their lives.

And there are the tens of thousands of Iraqis, including many thousands of civilians caught in the crossfire, who have been killed or injured. Their numbers are not even reported.

When I am in Vermont, and I am there most weekends, there is one question that I am asked over and over. "What are you doing to bring our troops home?" It is a question that I found myself asking this Memorial Day weekend, and in Vermont during those funerals, and then again at Normandy. It arises from a fundamental disagreement with President Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq, and his rationale for continuing to keep tens of thousands of our troops there in harm's way indefinitely.

The attacks of 9/11 were unlike anything our Nation had experienced since that infamous day at Pearl Harbor over a half century ago. I supported the President's decision to use military force against al-Qaida and the Taliban who had shielded them in Afghanistan. It was the right response and the whole world was behind us.

But as so many people warned, the decision to launch a unilateral, preemptive war against Iraq, even though Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11 and had no plan or ability to attack us, was a fateful diversion from the real terrorist threat.

The President's most recent justification for the war—previous justifications having been proven false—is that the Iraqi people are better off without Saddam Hussein. They are. But that is not the measure of a policy that led us into a war based on a false premise, faulty, distorted intelligence, and an astounding lack of understanding or concern for the huge costs and liabilities.

Those of us who have to vote to spend the billions of dollars that are necessary to keep our forces there should ask whether the President's decision to "stay the course," apparently indefinitely, justifies the continued deaths of Americans—soldiers and civilians—at the dawn of their lives, often by the very people they were sent to liberate or to help recover.

No one questions that we were unforgivably vulnerable on 9/11. Our borders were porous. Several of the hijackers were living openly, and illegally, in this country. Simply securing the doors on airplane cockpits might have prevented those attacks. Our law enforcement and intelligence agencies were barely speaking to each other. Communication between the White House, the Strategic Air Command, the FAA and the Pentagon was hopelessly confused. Countless warnings were ignored.

No one questions that we need to do far more to protect ourselves from terrorists. Every American is a potential target, as we saw, again, last week with the sickening execution style murder of Paul Johnson in Saudi Arabia.

The question is how best to protect ourselves at home, and how best to build the alliances we need to combat terrorism around the world.

Imagine if instead of spending \$150 billion, soon to be more than \$200 billion, to invade and occupy Iraq, we had used that money differently.

Imagine if we had used it to increase fiftyfold the number of police officers in this country.

Imagine if we had used it to put two air marshals on every airplane in or entering American airspace.

Imagine if we had used it to tighten our border controls, so rather than inspecting 10 percent of the shipping containers and trucks entering this country, we inspected 100 percent.

Imagine if we had used it to increase fiftyfold the number of immigration officers at our ports of entry, and to increase fiftyfold the number of investigators to track down people who are here illegally.

Imagine if we had used it to increase fiftyfold our surveillance capabilities along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

Imagine if we had used it to increase tenfold the amount we spend to protect nuclear materials, reactors, and weapons sites from sabotage or theft by terrorists.

Imagine if we had used it to teach Arabic to 10,000 new intelligence offi-

cers, and stationed them around the world. Think of the schools we could build, the hospitals, the medical breakthroughs funded, and on and on.

Imagine how much safer we would be if we had done these things. Instead, we are spending that money in Iraq, and we will spend another \$50 billion in Iraq next year. Yet even the Secretary of Defense testified that, after spending \$150 billion, he does not know if we are winning the war against terrorism. I think it is safe to say that if he believed we were, he would be the first to say so.

When President Bush announced his decision to invade Iraq he said all the things he was expected to say. He said he made his decision only as a last resort, after exhausting every other option. He said it was the hardest decision of his presidency.

In fact, other options were far from exhausted, and the intelligence he relied on was manipulated, misinterpreted, and wrong.

In fact, we now know that it was a decision the President made after minimal debate and with little difficulty. He consulted only his closest political advisors who for years, despite never experiencing combat themselves, had called for the use of force to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Those outside the President's inner circle who had reservations were ignored. Those who understand the history and the culture and religious and ethnic rivalries of that part of the world, whom he might have listened to, were ignored.

Over 200,000 young Americans were sent to Iraq, and over 135,000 remain there. They were sent into war despite the absence of any tangible threat to the United States. They were sent to invade a country that had nothing to do with 9/11.

Many were sent without body armor, without adequate water, and without the proper armor on their vehicles. They were sent in insufficient numbers to prevent the chaos that has caused twice the casualties since the collapse of the Iraqi Government, when the President declared "Mission Accomplished." Many of our most severely wounded have come home to inadequate medical care, or foreclosures on their homes.

The Pentagon's leaders always insist that the safety and welfare of our troops is their highest priority, but history is replete with examples to the contrary and today we are seeing history repeating itself.

Even worse, as hundreds of Americans die and thousands suffer terrible wounds, the rest of the country goes about its daily business, packing for their summer vacations, as if the war is someone else's problem.

Our soldiers do not have the luxury of refusing to fight if they disagree with the President. That is why a decision by the nation's leaders to send America's sons and daughters into harm's way, and to keep them where they are being killed and wounded

every day, should be made only if the security of the United States depends on it.

Aside from the usual patriotic clichés, the President has not explained why the security of the United States depends on keeping tens of thousands of Americans deployed in Iraq's cities where they are being blown up by roadside bombs and shot by snipers. What are they doing there that is worth the loss of lives?

There are encouraging steps as a new Iraqi government takes shape. But they do nothing—nothing—to obscure the grim reality that virtually every day more young American lives are lost. How long will this continue? The President says our troops will be there until they "finish the job." What job? It is more than a year since the fall of Baghdad, yet we still do not know what the mission is.

Is it to make Iraq a democracy? Is it, as our troops are told, to kill and capture "bad guys?" Is it to protect the oil wells and refineries and Halliburton's other investments there? Is it to remake the Middle East?

Even the President concedes that other countries are not going to donate significant numbers of their own troops.

The hard truth, which no one in this administration is willing to admit, is that regardless of almost anything else that happens in Iraq in the coming year, hundreds perhaps thousands more of America's sons and daughters are likely to be killed or wounded.

There are times when war is unavoidable, as it was when Germany invaded Europe, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, and when al-Qaida attacked New York and Washington. And when that happens, when the security of the country depends on it, the country unites and great sacrifices of life and limb are willingly made.

It is those sacrifices that we honor on Memorial Day, and which those of us who were just in Normandy were reminded of so vividly.

But the war against terrorism is a different kind of war.

It will not be won by invading and occupying countries.

It will not be won by alienating our friends and allies, nor by inciting the anger of Muslims around the world who now believe the United States is at war with Islam itself.

It will not be won by arresting people, calling them terrorists, torturing and humiliating them, and releasing them only after it becomes a public relations disaster. Why, if they were innocent, were they detained so long in the first place? It makes a mockery of the very idea of justice.

The war against terrorism will not be won by publicly claiming to respect the law when you are secretly declaring the law obsolete, breaking the law, and then refusing to disclose what was done.

It will not be won when half the American people do not believe the war in Iraq is making them safer.

It will not be won with self-serving rhetoric that distorts history and bears little resemblance to reality.

The war against terrorism will be best fought by using our military selectively, as we are by tracking down al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

It will be best fought by building alliances, by working closely and cooperatively with the law enforcement and intelligence agencies of other countries to infiltrate terrorist networks, capture their leaders, and seize their assets.

It will be best fought by doing far more to help create economic opportunities for the hundreds of millions of impoverished people, particularly in Muslim countries, who have little more than their faith and their anger, and who are the terrorist recruiters' greatest hope.

And it will be best fought by giving far higher priority to strengthening our defenses here at home.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO KEN ROBINSON

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today I want to remember Ken Robinson, a long time friend and community leader. Ken passed away on Friday, April 30, 2004 at the age of 89 years. I would like to pay tribute to the many contributions he has made to his community, to his profession, and to this country.

I have known Ken and his wife Mary Louise, both as personal friends and as the owners of the Bayard News, the Bagley Gazette, as well as several other Iowa newspapers. In 1940, he was one of the founders of the Bayard News which merged with the Bagley Gazette in 1973 to become the Bayard News Gazette. They received many awards over the years for their publishing including the National Newspaper Association's Amos Award which is given to a person who is considered to have done the most for the newspaper industry as well as for his own community.

When it came to being an advocate for publishers of newspapers in rural areas, Ken was the best. He was fearless, and nothing deterred him from approaching public officials, including the Post Master General or the President of the United States, to bring to their attention problems experienced by his newspaper readers due to delayed rural delivery service or postage price increases. He was a crusader in the best sense of the word when there was an issue that needed to be fixed.

He came to Washington, DC every year to participate in the annual conference sponsored by the National Newspaper Association. Ken was the one to ask the hard questions of the officials who would speak at the conference, holding their feet to the fire to follow up on commitments. At one association conference session at the White House, Iowa Newspaper Associa-

tion Director Bill Monroe remembers worrying about Ken and why he had not shown up in time for the meeting. Just before the meeting began, Ken came out of the Oval Office just before President Reagan came out to meet the group. He had been in the office promoting Bayard's sesquicentennial and had sold President Reagan a raffle ticket.

Ken also served as mayor of Bayard for 24 years, as a State representative, and was active in many organizations, including the League of Iowa Municipalities, the Democratic Party, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, and the board of Iowa Public Television. He was an active and loyal alumnus of Drake University from where he graduated with a major in economics. During his college years, he was managing editor of the Drake Times Delphic where he primarily wrote sports articles.

Ken was born near Panora, IA in 1914. In his junior year of high school, he was stricken with polio. As a person with a disability, long before the ADA was passed, Ken found ways to overcome barriers to achieve his long-time dream of owning and publishing a newspaper. He not only achieved his dream, but with his passion for justice and his impatience with inaction, he became a strong voice for common sense and fairness. As a civic leader, he had the kind of "can-do" attitude that motivates others to get involved to get things done. Who knows what Ken might have achieved if the ADA had been implemented while he was involved in so many aspects of community life. In this spirit, Ken was the first recipient of the Easter Seals of America Award to honor a person with a disability who had provided outstanding service to government and to community.

Ken and Mary Louise have been great friends to me and I will never forget them. People such as Ken and Mary are an inspiration to us all. They are among the leaders who are the fabric that gives shape and color to our rural communities. They have spent their life making their community, State, and Nation better places to live, work and raise families. And for that, we are forever grateful.●

NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH—JUNE 2004

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, realizing the dream of homeownership is one of the greatest moments in a lifetime. I am pleased that June has been designated as National Homeownership Month and I have enjoyed working with my colleagues to increase the number of Americans who are able to own their own homes. Homeownership provides more than just a shelter. It is a symbol of security that more American families are enjoying each year.

Owning a home enhances our lives and contributes to thriving communities. Where homeownership flour-

ishes, communities are more secure, residents are more civic-minded, schools are better and crime rates decline.

Today, the national homeownership rate stands at 68 percent. I am proud of the great strides we have made in order to raise it to the highest rate ever. But if you take a close look at that statistic, you'll see that there is still much work to be done. The fact is that homeownership rates have risen the most among groups that have always had the highest ownership, while they've actually fallen for households with children and those headed by someone under the age of 55. In addition, African American and Hispanic households' homeownership rates still lag behind those of white households by more than 25 percentage points.

I support President Bush in his goal of expanding the number of minority home owners by 5.5 million by 2010. As the lead sponsor of S. 198, the New Homestead Economic Opportunity Act, I am confident this legislation would go a long way toward increasing the number of American home owners—particularly first-time and minority home buyers. S. 198 will provide a tax credit for single-family homeownership. Modeled after the successful low-income rental housing tax credit, this proposal would allow States to allocate Federal tax credits to developers and investors who provide single-family homes for purchase by qualified buyers in qualified areas.

The legislation is sound public policy and makes good economic sense. It would foster revitalization of both urban and rural areas and help working Americans currently priced out of the market to buy their first home. It is estimated that each year the credit would produce some 50,000 new and rehabilitated homes, 120,000 jobs, \$4 billion in wages and \$2 billion in taxes and fees.

President Bush has stated that a home is:

a foundation for families and a source of stability for communities. Part of economic security is owning your own home. Part of being a secure America is to encourage homeownership.

Today, in the midst of National Homeownership Month, those words ring even more loud and true. I ask that my colleagues show their support for homeownership by cosponsoring S. 198.●

HONORING STEPHAN KATHMAN AND DAVID SHEETS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute and congratulate both Stephan Kathman of Covington, KY, and David Sheets of Lexington, KY, on being named two of the seventy-eight outstanding U.S. high school students to attend the 21st annual Research Science Institute (RSI). The Institute, sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the California Institute of Technology, will