

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I 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 February 25, 2001, a transgendered man named Victor Pachas was beaten, stabbed, slashed, and asphyxiated by a man who, according to his own attorneys, was "driven by revulsion and fear" of Pachas' sexual orientation.

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. By passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

WHAT IRAQ IS REALLY LIKE

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, as we go about our leisurely way, the majority of people back home think Iraq is a mistake. The Commanding General says we can't win, and Congress refuses to pay for the war. This generation not only has to fight the war, but this generation will have to pay for it, because my colleagues in the Senate want tax cuts so we can get the vote in November.

I think we all need to sober up about the realities of what is happening to our young soldiers in Iraq. Joseph Galloway, of the Knight Ridder Newspapers, wrote a column that should be mandatory reading for all of us. It appeared recently in The State newspaper in Columbia, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the State (Columbia, SC), June 27, 2004]

FROM IRAQ: "WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE"

(By Joseph L. Galloway)

The Internet, which fills our inboxes with spam and scams every day and keeps our delete keys shiny, occasionally delivers a real keeper, such as the words below, which were written by a graduate of West Point, Class of 2003, who's now at war in Iraq.

We tracked down the author, who gave us permission to quote from his letter so long as we didn't reveal his name. Old soldiers in the Civil War coined a phrase for green troops who survived their first taste of battle: "He has seen the elephant." This Army lieutenant sums up the combat experience better than many a grizzled veteran:

"Well, I'm here in Iraq, and I've seen it, and done it. I've seen everything you've ever seen in a war movie. I've seen cowardice; I've seen heroism; I've seen fear; and I've seen relief. I've seen blood and brains all over the back of a vehicle, and I've seen men bleed to death surrounded by their comrades. I've seen people throw up when it's all over, and I've seen the same shell-shocked look in 35-year-old experienced sergeants as in 19-year-old privates.

"I've heard the screams—Medic! Medic! I've hauled dead civilians out of cars, and I've looked down at my hands and seen them covered in blood after putting some poor Iraqi civilian in the wrong place at the wrong time into a helicopter. I've seen kids with gunshot wounds, and I've seen kids who've tried to kill me.

"I've seen men tell lies to save lives: What happened to Sergeant A.? The reply: C'mon man, he's all right—he's wondering if you'll be OK—he said y'all will have a beer together when you get to Germany. SFC A. was lying 15 feet away on the other side of the bunker with two medics over him desperately trying to get either a pulse or a breath. The man who asked after SFC A. was himself bleeding from two gut wounds and rasping as he tried to talk with a collapsed lung. One of them made it; one did not.

"I've run for cover as fast as I've ever run—I'll hear the bass percussion thump of mortar rounds and rockets exploding as long as I live. I've heard the shrapnel as it shredded through the trailers my men live in and over my head. I've stood, gasping for breath, as I helped drag into a bunker a man so pale and badly bloodied I didn't even recognize him as a soldier I've known for months. I've run across open ground to find my soldiers and make sure I had everyone.

"I've raided houses, and shot off locks and broken in windows. I've grabbed prisoners and guarded them. I've looked into the faces of men who would have killed me if I'd driven past their IED (improvised explosive device) an hour later. I've looked at men who've killed two people I knew, and saw fear.

"I've seen that, sadly, that men who try to kill other men aren't monsters, and most of them aren't even brave—they aren't defiant to the last—they're ordinary people. Men are men, and that's it. I've prayed for a man to make a move toward the wire, so I could flip my weapon off safe and put two rounds in his chest—if I could beat my platoon sergeant's shotgun to the punch. I've been wanted dead, and I've wanted to kill.

"I've sworn at the radio when I heard one of my classmate's platoon sergeants call over the radio: Contact! Contact! IED, small arms, mortars! One KIA, three WIA! Then a burst of staccato gunfire and a frantic cry: Red 1, where are you? Where are you? as we raced to the scene . . . knowing full well we were too late for at least one of our comrades.

"I've seen a man without the back of his head and still done what I've been trained to do—medic! I've cleaned up blood and brains so my soldiers wouldn't see it—taken pictures to document the scene, like I'm in some sort of bizarre cop show on TV.

"I've heard gunfire and hit the ground, heard it and closed my Humvee door, and heard it and just looked and figured it was too far off to worry about. I've seen men stacked up outside a house, ready to enter—some as scared as they could be, and some as calm as if they were picking up lunch from McDonald's. I've laughed at dead men, and watched a sergeant on the ground, laughing so hard he was crying, because my boots were stuck in a muddy field, all the while an Iraqi corpse was not five feet from him.

"I've heard men worry about civilians, and I've heard men shrug and sum up their viewpoint in two words—'F--- 'em.' I've seen people shoot when they shouldn't have, and I've seen my soldiers take an extra second or two, think about it, and spare somebody's life.

"I've bought drinks from Iraqis while new units watched in wonder from their trucks, pointing weapons in every direction, including the Iraqis my men were buying a Pepsi from. I've patrolled roads for eight hours at

a time that combat support units spend days preparing to travel 10 miles on. I've laughed as other units sit terrified in traffic, fingers nervously on triggers, while my soldiers and I deftly whip around, drive on the wrong side of the road, and wave to Iraqis as we pass. I can recognize a Sadiqqi (Arabic for friend) from a Haji (Arabic word for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca, but our word for a bad guy); I know who to point my weapons at, and who to let pass.

"I've come in from my third 18-hour patrol in as many days with a full beard and stared at a major in a pressed uniform who hasn't left the wire since we've been here, daring him to tell me to shave. He looked at me, looked at the dust and sweat and dirt on my uniform, and went back to typing at his computer.

"I've stood with my men in the mess hall, surrounded by people whose idea of a bad day in Iraq is a six-hour shift manning a radio, and watched them give us a wide berth as we swagger in, dirty, smelly, tired, but sure in our knowledge that we pull the triggers, and we do what the Army does, and they, with their clean uniforms and weapons that have never fired, support us.

"I've given a kid water and Gatorade and made a friend for life. I've let them look through my sunglasses—no one wears them in this country but us—and watched them pretend to be an American soldier—a swaggering invincible machine, secure behind his sunglasses, only because the Iraqis can't see the fear in his eyes.

"I've said it a thousand times—'God, I hate this country.' I've heard it a million times more—'This place sucks.' In quieter moments, I've heard more profound things: 'Sir, this is a thousand times worse than I ever thought it would be.' Or, 'My wife and Sgt. B's wife were good friends—I hope she's taking it well.'

"They say they're scared, and say they won't do this or that, but when it comes time to do it they can't let their buddies down, can't let their friends go outside the wire without them, because they know it isn't right for the team to go into the ballgame at any less than 100 percent.

"That's combat, I guess, and there's no way you can be ready for it. It just is what it is, and everybody's experience is different. Just thought you might want to know what it's really like."

SUPPORT IS BROAD

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the bipartisan list of supporters for extending the Federal Assault Weapons Ban continues to grow longer and even more influential. This week, former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton sent a joint letter to President Bush urging him to spur Congress to act to extend this important gun safety law. The former Presidents make an already impressive group of supporters even more remarkable.

The reauthorization of this law already has the support of America's law enforcement community, gun safety organizations, millions of moms and countless others. The message of the former Presidents is simple: the assault weapons ban works. They wrote to President Bush: "Each of us, along with President Reagan, worked hard in support of this vital law, and it would be a grave mistake if it were allowed to sunset."

In addition to banning 19 specific weapons, the existing 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.

The National Rifle Association has said that the ban is ineffective and unnecessary. The NRA asserts that guns labeled as assault weapons are rarely used in violent crimes. 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.

In 1994, I voted for the assault weapons ban and in March of this year I joined a bipartisan majority of the Senate in voting to extend the assault weapons ban for 10 years. Unfortunately, despite Senate passage of the amendment, 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 hope the letter from Presidents Ford, Carter and Clinton will prompt President Bush to act to promote the passage of the extension of the Assault Weapons Ban.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter from former Presidents Ford, Carter and Clinton be printed in the RECORD.

JUNE 14, 2004.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: We are pleased that you support reauthorization of the federal Assault Weapons Act, which is scheduled to expire in September. Each of us, along with President Reagan, worked hard in support of this vital law, and it would be a grave mistake if it were allowed to sunset.

There continues to be strong support for this law among our nation's police officers who risk their lives every day to protect the public. That is because they remember the days, prior to the enactment of the law in 1994, when military-style, semiautomatic firearms had become the weapons of choice for gangs, drug traffickers, and paramilitary extremist groups. The firearm death rate soared as criminals used these weapons, outfitted with 20, 50 and even hundred round ammunition clips, to kill, maim, and terrorize. We cannot go back to those days.

At a time when terrorism continues to be a serious threat, it is even more imperative that we renew the Assault Weapons Act and limit access to military-style weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips. But with upcoming recesses, there are not many legislative days left for Congress to renew the

law. We urge you to make reauthorization of the Assault Weapons Act a top priority for your Administration and spur Congress to action. If we can be of assistance to you in this regard, we are ready to do so.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD.
BILL CLINTON.
JIMMY CARTER.

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, last week I had the honor of joining with 52 of my colleagues in introducing a resolution, S. Res. 401, expressing the sense of the Senate that the week that includes Veterans' Day this year be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week." This marks the fifth year in a row that I have introduced such a resolution, which has been adopted unanimously by the Senate on all previous occasions.

The purpose of National Veterans Awareness Week is to serve as a focus for educational programs designed to make students in elementary and secondary schools aware of the contributions of veterans and their importance in preserving American peace and prosperity. This goal takes on particular importance and immediacy this year as we find ourselves again with uniformed men and women in harm's way in foreign lands.

Why do we need such an educational effort? In a sense, this action has become necessary because we are victims of our own success with regard to the superior performance of our armed forces. The plain fact is that there are just fewer people around now who have had any connection with military service. For example, as a result of tremendous advances in military technology and the resultant productivity increases, our current armed forces now operate effectively with a personnel roster that is one-third less in size than just 15 years ago. In addition, the success of the all-volunteer career-oriented force has led to much lower turnover of personnel in today's military than in previous eras when conscription was in place. Finally, the number of veterans who served during previous conflicts, such as World War II, when our military was many times larger than today, is inevitably declining.

The net result of these changes is that the percentage of the entire population that has served in the Armed Forces is dropping rapidly, a change that can be seen in all segments of society. Whereas during World War II it was extremely uncommon to find a family in America that did not have one of its members on active duty, now there are numerous families that include no military veterans at all. Even though the Iraqi war has been prominently discussed on television and in the newspapers, many of our children are much more preoccupied with the usual concerns of young people than with keeping up with the events of the day. As a consequence, many of our

youth still have little or no connection with or knowledge about the important historical and ongoing role of men and women who have served in the military. This omission seems to have persisted despite ongoing educational efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations.

This lack of understanding about military veterans' important role in our society can have potentially serious repercussions. In our country, civilian control of the armed forces is the key tenet of military governance. A citizenry that is oblivious to the capabilities and limitations of the armed forces, and to its critical role throughout our history, can make decisions that have unexpected and unwanted consequences. Even more important, general recognition of the importance of those individual character traits that are essential for military success, such as patriotism, selflessness, sacrifice, and heroism, is vital to maintaining these key aspects of citizenship in the armed forces and even throughout the population at large.

The failure of our children to understand why a military is important, why our society continues to depend on it for ultimate survival, and why a successful military requires integrity and sacrifice, will have predictable consequences as these youngsters become of voting age. Even though military service is a responsibility that is no longer shared by a large segment of the population, as it has been in the past, knowledge of the contributions of those who have served in the Armed Forces is as important as it has ever been. To the extent that many of us will not have the opportunity to serve our country in uniform, we must still remain cognizant of our responsibility as citizens to fulfill the obligations we owe, both tangible and intangible, to those who do serve and who do sacrifice on our behalf.

The importance of this issue was brought home to me five years ago by Samuel I. Cashdollar, who was then a 13-year-old seventh grader at Lewes Middle School in Lewes, DE. Samuel won the Delaware VFW's Youth Essay Contest that year with a powerful presentation titled "How Should We Honor America's Veterans"? Samuel's essay pointed out that we have Nurses' Week, Secretaries' Week, and Teachers' Week, to rightly emphasize the importance of these occupations, but the contributions of those in uniform tend to be overlooked. We don't want our children growing up to think that Veterans Day has simply become a synonym for department store sale, and we don't want to become a nation where more high school seniors recognize the name Britney Spears than the name Dwight Eisenhower.

National Veterans Awareness Week complements Veterans Day by focusing on education as well as commemoration, on the contributions of the many in addition to the heroism and service