

to join the military. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of several relatives. Like them, he wanted to protect his family and his friends and his country. So after his high school graduation in 2001, Gavin enlisted in the U.S. Army.

According to Gavin's grandmother, Gladys Hykes:

He was wonderful. He loved the service. That was his goal.

Gavin planned to make a career for himself in the military, aspiring to join an elite Ranger battalion. He was well on his way toward achieving that dream. Gavin earned his paratrooper wings and was known for performing, with ease, some of the most difficult airplane jumps. Known as a "Javelin Jumper," he would jump from planes while carrying part of an antitank missile system strapped to his leg. Upon receiving an award of recognition for this accomplishment, Gavin dedicated it to his parents and had his thanks to them engraved on the plaque.

Gavin loved his family very much. He had an especially strong bond with his mother Cathy. Oh, he loved her cooking. He loved to spend time with her. He wrote and called home often, and when he did he had simple requests. According to his mom, Cathy:

I kept sending him letters and boxes. He wanted Kool-Aid and chips. And Copenhagen. He wanted Copenhagen. I didn't want to send it, but I did.

Gavin called home on February 13, 2003, to say his unit was leaving on Valentine's Day for Iraq. Soldiers only had an hour for family visits. Cathy and her husband Willie drove more than nine hours to visit one last time with Gavin. As Cathy said:

All I knew was that I had to get there. I had to be there to hug him.

Many of his fellow comrades have said that Gavin Neighbor was the kind of soldier you wanted by your side—any time, any place. He was dependable. He was tough. He was a real leader.

Gavin was also known for his ability to make light of serious situations—an admirable quality in the face of war. While training in California, to humor his comrades, he would walk around flapping his arms like a chicken and then claim to be a dinosaur. During a punishing mountain hike, Gavin lightheartedly asked his leader, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" The other members of the platoon could not help but smile. As Sergeant Arthur Swartz said at Gavin's memorial service:

When we were at our lowest, Gavin could turn the whole platoon around just by making a joke or saying something funny. . . . He was definitely the best, youngest soldier in my platoon.

Gavin's unique sense of humor did not cloak the fact that he was also a very hard worker and a very independent young man. Captain Todd Hollins, a chaplain with the 82nd Airborne Division, said that when he thinks of Gavin:

I see a young man who chose to walk the road less traveled—a man who gave 100 percent, all the way, all the time. . . . I see a young man, one who cared about others more than himself, a man with a zest for life, who was willing to face his fears. . . . I see a volunteer, a bold spirit. I see a young man who was genuine in all regards.

Gavin Neighbor's dependability, commitment, and fun-loving attitude will never be forgotten. His life is an example for us all. Left to cherish his memory are his parents; his sisters, Roxanne Lewis and Tracy Neighbor; brother Willie Neighbor, Jr.; and Gavin's special friend—his fiancé, his soulmate—Rachel Sanderson.

Gavin Neighbor was just a good kid, who died too young. I think that Brigadier General Abe Turner, assistant division commander of operations with the 82nd Airborne, said it best:

He quickly became a very important part of our band of brothers. We asked him if he'd be willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice, and he did. . . . He was our hero.

PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about patient safety. There is bipartisan legislation pending in the Senate that is absolutely critical to reducing health care errors and increasing health care quality. It is S. 720, the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act.

The HELP Committee reported this bill to the Senate in November of last year. It was approved in committee by a unanimous vote. It is past time for the Senate to vote on and pass this important legislation.

This patient safety legislation is an important step toward building a culture of safety and quality in health care. The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act would create a framework through which hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers can work to improve the health care quality in a protected legal environment.

The bill grants privilege and confidentiality protections to health care providers to allow them to report health care errors and near-misses to patient safety organizations.

The bill also allows these patient safety organizations to collect and analyze the data confidentially. After analyzing the data, patient safety organizations would report on trends in health care errors and offer guidance to providers on how to eliminate or minimize these errors.

Some of this takes place today, but much more information could be collected and analyzed if providers felt confident that reporting these errors did not increase the likelihood that they or their colleagues would be sued for honest mistakes.

This legislation would not permit anyone to hide information about a medical mistake. Under the bill, the lawyers still can access medical records or other information that

would normally be recoverable in legal proceedings. However, the bill would ensure that the analysis of that information by patient safety organizations would take place on a separate track than in a protected legal environment.

Health care providers would be much more likely to share information about honest mistakes and how to prevent them if they have some assurance the analysis of their information will not result in a tidy package of information a personal injury lawyer could use against them in court.

Errors in medical treatment take place far too often today. Unfortunately, providers live in fear of our unpredictable and unfair medical litigation system, and this legal fear inhibits efforts to address the root causes of health care errors. Without appropriate protections for the collection and analysis of patient safety data, providers are unwilling to report mistakes and errors, which is one of the reasons health care quality today is not what it could be.

Litigation does nothing to improve quality or safety. The constant threat of litigation indeed stifles honest analysis of why health errors happen. This is one more reason why we need wholesale reform of our medical litigation system. We need to foster alternatives that restore trust between patients and providers and result in fair and reliable outcomes for both parties. We need to scrap the present system, not just cap it. Until we do so, we should take whatever steps we can to create an environment that protects the collection and analysis of patient safety data so providers can learn from their mistakes and the mistakes of others and prevent them from happening in the future.

The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act is one of these steps. Last week, our committee chairman, Senator GREGG, asked for unanimous consent that we move to consideration of this legislation in the Senate. This is the third time since November he has done so. Each time he has been blocked by our colleagues in the minority, even though the committee of jurisdiction was unanimous—you cannot get more bipartisan than that—in support for the bill.

My colleagues in the minority keep talking about problems with health care quality, as they keep on talking about the loss of American jobs. However, talk is cheap when their actions don't match their words.

If they are really so concerned about improving health care in our Nation, why would they object to a bill that would reduce errors and improve patient safety, particularly a bipartisan bill with unanimous committee support? If they are really so concerned about American workers and jobs, why won't they let a bill improving the Nation's job training system go to conference?

Another example of what is happening or not happening in the Senate: We have a bill, a bipartisan bill, that

will help workers get back to work or find better jobs. This bill will equip our workforce with skills necessary for America to compete and succeed in the global economy. It reauthorizes and improves the Nation's job training that was created under the Workforce Investment Act. The Workforce Investment Act provides job training and employment services to more than 900,000 unemployed workers each year. Just like the patient safety legislation, this bipartisan bill passed out of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee unanimously. We passed it on the Senate floor by unanimous consent last November. Remember, that is as bipartisan as you can get.

Where is the bill now? Well, it passed in the House, too. The House has a somewhat different version. When there is a different version between the House and the Senate, you normally would have a conference committee, and the conference committee would work out the differences so that both Houses could pass it again as a unified bill that would then go to the President to be signed. It has to be one bill that goes to the President, not two bills that go to the President. You have a conference committee to work those bills out.

Now, the House appointed a conference committee. It is a very simple task. You just figure out how many Members are going to be in the conference committee, and Members are chosen from both sides of the aisle in both Chambers to meet together to talk about the differences, to propose alternatives, to vote on those alternatives, and to come up with a compromise bill. Sometimes the compromise is taking all of one Chamber's bill and eliminating the other one. Usually it is somewhere in between.

The first excuse I heard on this Workforce Investment Act, which will train 900,000 people to do jobs they do not have now or definitely to have better jobs than what they might have now, with a particular emphasis on moving women into higher paying jobs was how bad the outsourcing is in this country. Yes, because we do not have trained workers to take those jobs at the present time. We hear about the wages in this country. Yes, because the people do not have the higher skills for which you get paid higher wages.

This bill would provide training for jobs we are having to send overseas right now or better paying jobs for American workers. We passed it unanimously. The House passed it. The House appointed a conference committee. We are not even allowed to appoint a conference committee, to get together and talk about it with the House. That is nothing final. It would have to be voted on again before it could be passed. There is an opportunity for a filibuster at that final point. Instead what we are getting is a filibuster at this point, a very subtle filibuster but nevertheless a filibuster.

If jobs are important, why aren't we doing this JOBS bill that was unanimously passed out of committee and unanimously passed on the floor of the Senate? A lot of opportunity, and it is passing by. I guess because there is a Presidential election, and it might help President Bush if there were more jobs. Actually, the only ones it would help, if there are more jobs, is the people getting those jobs. None of us ought to be stopping people from getting jobs or getting better jobs. We recognize that. That is why we passed it unanimously.

So where is that bill now? We can't get a conference committee appointed to resolve the differences with the House. There was enough trust in what I did in committee that it passed unanimously. There was enough trust when it came to the Senate floor that we passed the bill unanimously. The only thing I can see that has happened in the meantime is that we have gotten closer to an election. That should not happen in America. We teach people bad things about elections when we hold up important things such as workforce investment for jobs. If we really want to take care of jobs and workers in this country, we should appoint conferees for the Workforce Investment Act legislation.

I could run through a few more excuses that I have heard on this bill. One of the excuses was that we might put something in that would allow faith-based groups to participate in job training and, under that scenario, put in something that would allow them to not hire people who are averse to their religion.

Members may be surprised to find out that we already have statutes that do provide that churches, when they are involved in government work, can't discriminate, except they don't have to hire people who are averse to their religion. That would be a very small change if it made it in there at all, but we are not even allowed to get together and discuss whether that would make it in there for fear that maybe it would. Again, that is just an excuse for not passing the bill, an excuse to keep jobs from being created which would make the economy better and which would improve the President's chances of getting reelected. That is not how politics is supposed to work.

I have to say there is a difference between Republicans and Democrats on most of the big issues facing our Nation. If my colleagues in the minority want to bottle up legislation with which they disagree, that is their prerogative. But that is not what I am talking about. I am not talking about bottling up issues with which they disagree. We have members of the minority party holding up bipartisan bills that received unanimous approval in committee—that is where the patients safety bill is—and holding up conferences on a bill that received unanimous support on the Senate floor. That is where the workforce bill is.

The only logical conclusion I could draw to these roadblocks is based on

politics, not policy, and that is a shame.

Right now, the Senate floor reminds me of the airspace above a busy airport. We have a number of bipartisan bills lined up for final approach, but our colleagues in the minority are holding those bills up and won't allow them to land. The tactics of my colleagues in the minority give new meaning to the term "holding pattern." That should not happen. There is going to be a crash.

It is time for our Democratic colleagues to break this holding pattern so we can pass bipartisan bills such as the Patient Safety Act and the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. These are not only bipartisan bills, they received unanimous committee support. Let's set election politics aside for a moment. These are bipartisan bills, so no one party can claim credit for their passage.

The Patient Safety Act was introduced by the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS, who is the lone independent in the Senate. This bill is more than bipartisan. My distinguished Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, suggested last week that we should approve the House-passed patient safety bill. He suggested we should take up the House bill rather than pass the Senate bill because Members of the House are the true experts on such complex legislation.

I wonder if my colleague's opinion would be the same on medical liability reform. After all, the expert legislators in the House have sent us some excellent legislation to reform our medical litigation system. Perhaps we should stop working on this in the Senate and approve the House bill, as he is suggesting we should do with patient safety.

I mentioned the Workforce Investment Act. The House passed that one. Their version is considerably more difficult, perhaps more conservative than the version I worked through with unanimous consent on this side, but if we are going to consider them the experts on patient safety, why don't we consider them the experts on workforce investment and take their version of the bill? We didn't do that on that bill.

No, the right way to do it is to pass the patient safety bill, hopefully, by unanimous consent over here because there is no dissension on it. The dissension is with what they are doing over on the House side. So we would go ahead and pass it, and then we have a conference committee, a conference committee in the old-fashioned style. Not this "let's preconference and give somebody on the minority side a veto right over anything that is done." That is a brandnew twist around here. What we have always done is appointed the conference committee, recognizing that there are majorities and minorities even on the conference committee,

but that the point is to get the agreement between the House and the Senate. We will get that agreement between the House and the Senate, and will have better patient safety.

I hope our colleagues in the minority will agree to take 2 hours of their time to debate and vote on the bipartisan safety act. Two hours is not a lot of time. It is the least we can do on such an important piece of legislation. We have spent hour upon hour working on this bill in committee and crafting a bill that received unanimous bipartisan support. Let's spend 2 more hours on the Patient Safety Act so that we can improve the quality and safety of health care in America. I don't think that is too much to ask.

DEPARTURE OF REPRESENTATIVE C.J. (CHIEN-JEN) CHEN

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, a good friend of the Senate Taiwan caucus, Ambassador C.J. (Chien-Jen) Chen, will soon be leaving Washington, D.C., after having served for nearly 4 years here as Taiwan's principle representative. We are going to miss him very much. As chairman of the Taiwan caucus, I would like to bring special attention to his accomplishments for his country and his commitment to the advancement of freedom.

Ambassador Chen brought a wealth of experience to his job. He was first assigned to Washington, D.C. 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, Ambassador Chen 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.

Ambassador Chen's skill and determination as a representative of Taiwan have been made plain in many ways, but I want to mention one in particular. He has persistently pushed for Taiwan to have a role in international organizations. That is a real challenge, because Beijing opposes it at every turn, but Mr. Chen has pressed on. 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. Chen in place to lead the way. He understands that the people of Taiwan are as entitled to the blessings of liberty such as shared knowledge and the free exchange of information. Fighting for this freedom, he has had a special determination to secure Taiwan's entrance into the World Health Organization, an issue on which he and I have worked together. As the SARS virus swept Asia and frightened the entire globe, he seized the moral initiative to say the Taiwanese people are also vulnerable to this disease and that Taiwanese doctors also may heal. He clearly stated that they have a right to seek help and to give it, and that no petty, technical political agenda should stand in the way of that simple affirmation of humanity. When the doors to the WHO are thrown open for Taiwan, and they will be, people will remember with gratitude how C.J. Chen moved us toward that day.

One of the most notable and likable things about C.J. is his inexhaustible optimism. While the United States-Taiwan relationship has certainly experienced its fair share of twists and turns, ups and downs—as Mr. Chen will surely attest—he has always remained consistently upbeat. 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.

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President. Today I would like to recognize women in technology. While gender equity is not found on the agenda when discussing homeland security, it certainly is a key strategy for maintaining our Nation's preeminent status in science and technical innovation. The last 30 years have seen women make great strides in education and employment. Women are receiving more than 50 percent of the bachelor degrees conferred and are close to reaching parity in the once male-dominated fields, such as law. Unfortunately, these gains have not been uniform in all fields. Women continue to be persistently underrepresented in high-demand, high-wage science, technology, engineering and math, STEM, education and employment. While women make up 46 percent of the American labor force, they are less than 25 percent of the total science

and engineering workforce, and have not been able to break through a 10 percent ceiling in engineering.

At a time when we face a shortage of skilled STEM workers who are U.S. citizens, women provide an untapped national resource to fill the workforce pipeline. Recent studies from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Commerce confirm these conclusions, including the September 2000 Report of the Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology, which concludes that, "Unless the STEM labor market becomes more representative of the general U.S. workforce, the nation may likely face severe shortages in [STEM] workers and thus risks undermining its global competitiveness."

We are at a serendipitous time, when our Nation's economic and security imperatives are aligned with social justice. We must leverage this opportunity to build the requisite partnerships with stakeholders in government, academia, and industry to recruit, train, and retain women and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields. Not only is it a strategy that will ensure our global competitiveness and national security, but it is the right thing to do to ensure that all our citizens have equal access to the education and training needed to succeed.

In 1999, when I recognized that the jobs at the Maui High Performance Computer Center and other related research and development contract activities were being filled by males recruited from the mainland, I secured Department of Labor funding to launch the Women in Technology project designed to bring Hawaii's women into these emerging STEM fields. The island of Maui reflects the characteristics of many rural American communities: professional isolationism, limited access to higher education, overdependence on a single economic engine, and perceived limited career opportunities for its young people. These conditions uniquely position Maui to pilot workforce development programming that can be exported to other rural communities.

The Women in Technology, WIT, project is administered by the Maui Economic Development Board, a private nonprofit organization well respected for its leadership in helping to diversify the economy through high technology industry development. The board of directors, comprised of community leaders in industry, academia, business, and government gave the project access to key partners. Interviews, focus groups, and roundtable discussions helped establish the workforce challenges and skill sets needed to sustain industry growth projections. Workshops were designed to provide tools to educators and industry on how to overcome the barriers that had created the chilly climate for women. Buy-in was established that even though teachers and employers had no