

worked hand in hand with our colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, and together they introduced the Combat Meth Act in January of this year.

As leadership, I was proud to work with our corresponding House leadership to encourage our Members to work with all of our counterparts to get this done, to work in a bicameral way.

The Combat Meth Act is a victory for law enforcement, a victory for our communities, and a victory for every family who has experienced the pain and the destruction of methamphetamine abuse. In 10 years—one decade—meth has become America's worst drug problem. That is above marijuana, cocaine, heroin—over the last 10 years. It is destroying individuals.

We have all heard stories in our various States and districts of families and whole communities being destroyed by the new emergence of methamphetamine and the destruction it causes. My own State of Tennessee has been hit particularly hard. In 2004, Tennessee ranked No. 2, tied with Iowa and just behind Missouri, in the number of methamphetamine lab seizures. Sandy Mattice, a former U.S. Attorney in Tennessee, and now a Federal judge in Chattanooga, calls meth "the worst stuff" we have ever seen. It has led to some of the worst and most disturbing cases of violence to hit the front pages of today.

This August, when I was back at home traveling across Tennessee, I heard stories again and again from my fellow Tennesseans of the devastating destruction meth is creating in communities all across the State. I heard about addicted mothers and fathers abusing their children, abusing each other during the highs and the lows created by methamphetamine use. I heard about addicts stealing from their own spouses, stealing from their own families because they were so desperate to support this highly addictive drug and the habit that becomes a part of it.

There is one Tennessee story which was so horrific that it made national news. Because it was so accurately reflective of the destruction and pain created by meth, the laws in Tennessee were changed.

In June of last year, authorities found 3-year-old Haley Spicer in her father's mobile home in Campbell County. Haley had been burned over her body with cigarettes, she had been scalded with hot water, and she had been severely beaten. The fumes from her father's meth lab were so toxic that Haley's eyelids were nearly melted shut. Haley has undergone several surgeries to open her eyes. She faces a number of operations in the future to rebuild her nose and to rebuild her injured ear.

Haley's father Tommy Joe Owens was sentenced in October to 95 years in prison for what he did to his child. His live-in girlfriend Charlotte Claiborne pleaded no contest and was sentenced to 20 years behind bars.

Haley's case was so shocking that in August the State legislature passed Haley's Law to drastically toughen child abuse penalties. This was an important victory for child abuse victims, but it didn't get to the concurrent problem of meth abuse and addiction which led to this crime.

Local law enforcement—I heard it all over the State—is literally overwhelmed by the meth crisis. They are calling out for our help. They need us to pass the Combat Meth Act to restrict access to the cold medicines that contain pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, which are the key ingredients easily obtained today and used to manufacture methamphetamine. Once you have those ingredients, meth can literally be manufactured with a few pots and pans in a kitchen.

While some States, such as my home State of Tennessee, have passed laws restricting access to these products, other States have not yet acted. As a result, meth cooks can jump from one State to another State to another State to get the over-the-counter ingredients they use to make this highly addictive toxin.

Law enforcement and prosecutors tell me the single greatest impact we could have on reducing meth abuse is to require all 50 States to restrict access to the cold medicines containing the ingredients used to make methamphetamine. Data from States that have gone ahead and passed laws restricting access to these precursor chemicals proves that indeed to be the case. They work.

Oklahoma, for instance, passed a law last year and with this law has seen a dramatic reduction in meth lab seizures. Data from my own State of Tennessee—we passed a similar law earlier in the year—shows the same trend, a steady decline in meth lab seizures.

The Combat Meth Act will require all 50 States to do what Oklahoma and Tennessee have done. The Combat Meth Act is critical to containing and defeating the meth epidemic. We need one uniform standard to close the loopholes in the system so that producers can't cruise from State to State exploiting our differences.

I again thank Senator TALENT and Senator FEINSTEIN for their leadership and for pushing hard to get this done.

I urge my colleagues to pass the PATRIOT Act, which includes this much needed law. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for law enforcement across this land in our communities. The Combat Meth Act is a victory for towns and for communities and cities all across America. It is a victory for all of the innocent individuals and families who have been harmed by this dangerous and deadly drug.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

SECOND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAMS

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, last week I had the privilege of meeting pri-

vately with numerous soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division, which is stationed at Fort Carson, CO. These soldiers had just returned from their first tour in Iraq where they helped maintain the peace near the former terrorist hot-bed of Fallujah. I spent over an hour talking with them about their experiences, asking them about their challenges, and hearing their thoughts about whether we should stay the course in Iraq.

These soldiers spent the last year fighting the Iraqi terrorists, in some cases house-to-house. They helped train several Iraqi security units and participated in numerous reconstruction projects throughout central Iraq. Sadly, they lost 68 of their own while in Iraq. Yet, while they deeply mourn the loss of their comrades, they have no regrets about their time in Iraq.

Indeed, if there was one thing I took away from my meeting with the soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, it was that each and every one of these soldiers was proud of their accomplishments in Iraq. They completed their mission well and helped thousands of Iraqis better understand the value of freedom and prosperity.

And why shouldn't these soldiers be proud of what they achieved? The progress we have made in Iraq is breath-taking, and these soldiers have been a part of it.

Those who believe that the war in Iraq has become a quagmire certainly haven't been paying attention. The President's strategy is working and we are making progress.

The reconstruction accomplishments in Iraq are staggering:

Over 3,000 schools have been renovated and refurbished; 133,000 primary school teachers—a third of Iraq's educators—have received additional training and technical assistance; primary school enrollment is up 19 percent from prewar levels; nearly 250 health care centers have been renovated and another 563 have received new equipment; over 2,500 primary health care workers have received training to better meet the Iraq's health care needs; in 2005 alone, 98 percent of Iraqi children between 1 and 5 years old have been immunized against measles, mumps, and rubella; more than 3 million Iraqis now have clean water, which was not adequately supplied before the war; more than 4.5 million Iraqis benefit from sewage disposal projects the United States has funded; sewage in many areas of Iraq used to literally run down the streets; 30,000 new businesses have registered with the Iraqi government in the past year alone; Iraqis are buying televisions, air conditioners, microwave ovens, and cell phones—all goods that were nearly impossible to buy unless you were one of Saddam's cronies; the generation of electricity is significantly higher than prewar level, though this area remains a challenge because of the power-consuming goods the Iraqis are buying.

The training of Iraqi security forces is continuing at a brisk pace. Over 200,000 soldiers and policemen have been trained so far. As the soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team at Fort Carson will tell you, some Iraqi units are highly competent and very capable. Other Iraqi units have a long way to go. Yet progress is being made.

Just in the last 2 weeks, Iraqi security forces conducted nearly 100 company-level combat operations on their own without U.S. assistance.

On the political front, the progress in Iraq has been nothing short of amazing.

As President Bush pointed out in his speech 2 days ago, Iraq was in the iron grip of a cruel dictator who murdered his own people, attacked his neighbors, and continued his decade-long defiance of the United Nations just 2½ years ago.

Since then, the Iraqi people have assumed sovereignty of their own country, held free elections, put together a new constitution, and approved that constitution in a nation-wide referendum.

Tomorrow, Iraqis will again return to the voters booth for the third time in the last year. They will be choosing a new government under a new constitution, and they will be choosing democracy over tyranny.

Hundreds of political parties representing every element of Iraqi society, including Sunni, Shittes, and Kurds, are participating in this highly competitive, completely unprecedented electoral race.

Despite the constant danger of terror attacks, Iraq is buzzing in a campaign-like atmosphere. Baghdad, Najaf, and Mosul are full of signs and posters. Television and radio are filled with political ads and commentary.

Political rallies for candidates are being held around the country. Nothing the terrorists can do or say has stopped this march toward freedom and democracy.

Like Shittes and Kurds, Sunni politicians are now coming under attack by the Iraqi terrorists. But the Sunnis now know that terror will never overcome the political momentum that has been gaining speed in Iraq. They know that an agenda of fear and tyranny will only lead to more death and destruction.

They see that the future of Iraq lies not in the hateful ideology of extremism but in freedom, prosperity, and hope.

As the Denver Post in their editorial today, tomorrow marks an important milestone towards self-government for the Iraqi people.

The elections in Iraq are a sign of tremendous political progress, but they are not the only sign. The development of the rule of law and building of new political institutions is just as important—if not more so.

The United States is helping build an independent, impartial judiciary system capable of protecting all Iraqis and

is helping Iraqi lawmakers develop a body of law that will sustain Iraq through the challenges of the future.

In particular, the trial of Saddam Hussein has shown all Iraqis that even the most despicable criminals deserve due process and an opportunity to prove their innocence under the law.

Some have questioned whether the war in Iraq is really a part of the war against terror. The terrorists have made it abundantly clear that Iraq is central in their war against the civilized world.

They have also made it clear that they will not stop with Iraq; they will strike Iraq's neighbors as they did last month in Jordan; they will strike Europe as they did in the Madrid bombings; and they will not hesitate to strike America again as they did on September 11.

The soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry at Fort Carson understand the stakes of the war in Iraq. They know that if we run away, all of their work will go for naught. They know that if we give up, the lives of millions of Iraqis will be put at risk. And they know that if we surrender, the fight the terrorists will be emboldened to hit us where it hurts the most—here in the United States.

I applaud the soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team for their service to our Nation and to the people of Iraq. They have every right to be proud of their achievements, as does every U.S. soldier, sailor, airman, and marine who has helped bring freedom to Iraq. We owe the men and women in our Armed Forces a debt of gratitude—their courage and bravery has inspired me and should inspire every American.

Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important issue.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VITTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PATRIOT ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, shortly after 9/11 we came together on a bipartisan basis in Congress to try to make certain that terrible tragedy was never repeated. We worked on a bipartisan basis to give tools to our Government to fight terrorism, to upgrade the laws of the United States so our Government could stay ahead of the curve when it came to that threat. We understood then, as we do now, that those tools were necessary for our Govern-

ment, and we understood as well that preventing terrorism is the most important and the most valid exercise of governmental responsibility.

But we were concerned, concerned that at that moment in our history we were responding quickly, perhaps emotionally, to the threat and to the tragedy of September 11. So in the wisdom of both Republican and Democratic legislators, we included in the PATRIOT Act this new set of tools to fight terrorism, sunset provisions. We said: Four years from now we will take another look at it. We are going to try to decide at that point in time if we went too far because at issue here was not just fighting terrorism but our basic rights and liberties.

Giving the Government more power over the people in this country may be necessary in some regards to deal with terrorism, but we should always do it carefully because our basic rights and liberties, as guaranteed by our Constitution and the tradition of our laws, are things we are all sworn to uphold and protect. So the PATRIOT Act was passed on a bipartisan basis with only one dissenting vote in the Senate and included these sunset provisions.

Well, the calendar has run, it is 4 years later, and now again we are looking at this PATRIOT Act. I found it interesting that there were certain provisions of this act which were obviously accepted by the American people, provisions which gave the Government more authority. But there were several that became controversial. And over the years, since the act was first passed, a number of Members of the Senate started asking questions about whether perhaps we did go too far in passing the PATRIOT Act. It led to the introduction of legislation which I cosponsored with Senator LARRY CRAIG of Idaho entitled "the SAFE Act," an attempt not to repeal the PATRIOT Act but to change some provisions which may have gone too far.

It was an interesting bill by political standards because the cosponsors could not be more different. Senator CRAIG is a very conservative Republican from Idaho. I, of course, am a Democrat from a blue State in Illinois. Yet we came together and believed we had a common goal of giving the Government enough power to deal with terrorism and protect us but not too much power to take away our basic rights and liberties. We attracted cosponsors from both sides of the aisle—Senator JOHN SUNUNU of New Hampshire; Senator LISA MURKOWSKI of Alaska; Senator RUSS FEINGOLD, who has been a very able leader on this whole issue, as well as Senator KEN SALAZAR, former attorney general of the State of Colorado. We have all come together to try to make certain that rewriting the PATRIOT Act on this 4-year anniversary is done in a responsible fashion.

We could not have had a better outcome in the Senate. I cannot think of one. We passed our revision of the PATRIOT Act out of the Judiciary Committee unanimously. I want to tell