

Tragically, he passed away on February 10 from a gunshot wound at his home base at Camp Taji. While the loss for Kimberly and her family will be felt deeply, they have found some solace knowing that his last days were spent doing what he wanted to do, helping people. In the days following his death, it was clear to his family the impact he had on each of their lives. It was also quickly apparent that although he was no longer with them, his presence would always be felt; whether it was the devotion and thoughtfulness evident in the basket of chocolates and Valentine's Day card he sent Kimberly just before his death, the spirit embodied in the eyes of Abigail who turned 1 year old on February 23, or the courage that Tristan, thanks to her father, has shown in trying to understand what has happened. They are lasting examples of not only the remarkable way he led his life, but more importantly, are a testament to the kind of man he was.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of William Robins, and to all those who knew and loved him. His 31 years with us were far too short, but his legacy of love and service to his Nation will remain with us forever.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On October 2, 2004, Daniel Fetta was brutally beaten to death. Fetta, a 39-year-old deaf and gay man, was allegedly struck repeatedly with bricks and boards by three men in his home town of Waverly, OH. His body was stripped of all clothing and thrown into a dumpster. It is believed that the motivation behind this brutal attack was the sexual orientation of the victim.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harm that comes 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.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, this week is National Peace Corps Week. It is with great pleasure that I send my congratulations to the Peace Corps volunteers serving throughout the world as we celebrate the Peace Corps' 44th year of service.

Currently, more than 7,700 volunteers are answering the call to serve in 72 countries around the world. It is a list that is growing. In an historic agreement focused on science and technology, the Peace Corps entered Mexico last year. And over 20 other countries have expressed interest in establishing a partnership with the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps volunteers have made a 27-month commitment to serve overseas typically in undeveloped or rural areas devoid of many modern necessities such as sanitation, transportation, and electricity. They work to achieve the first goal of the Peace Corps: training and educating people around the world. Volunteers are serving as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, agricultural workers, and as HIV/AIDS educators. Today over 3,100 Peace Corps volunteers are helping to implement President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Even as they work on their projects to help those in the countries they serve, Peace Corps volunteers become America's unofficial "ambassadors" of goodwill, fulfilling the Peace Corps' second goal of helping to promote a better understanding of America. In the words of former U.S. Ambassador Tibor Nagy: "During my long overseas service, I consistently met two categories of people who were highly favorable toward our country: those who had close contact with Peace Corps volunteers, and those who had studied in the U.S." These kinds of public diplomacy efforts are more important today than ever.

What's more, Peace Corps volunteers' unofficial "ambassador" duties do not conclude when they return home to the United States. Rather, they set about completing the third goal of the Peace Corps by promoting a better understanding of other countries here in America. In this way, Peace Corps volunteers give back much to their communities here at home.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Narcotics Affairs, it is my desire to continue to assist in the growth of Peace Corps, and the well-being of its volunteers. As the Peace Corps continues to expand, I believe it is necessary to provide this agency the resources it needs to continue to ensure volunteer safety, productivity, and satisfaction. And I applaud efforts by the Peace Corps to further diversify our volunteers.

It is my pleasure to recognize 223 Minnesota volunteers who right now are serving our Nation around the globe in countries from Albania to Uzbekistan. I would also like to recognize the over 5,000 returned Peace Corps volunteers who have already represented Minnesota and the United States abroad. Finally, I am happy to join with all past and present Peace Corps volunteers as we celebrate Peace Corps Week 2005, February 28–March 6.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of the Peace Corps during National Peace Corps Week—February 28 through March 6.

For 44 years, the Peace Corps has engaged in meaningful work and made innumerable contributions to both America and the countries served by Corps members. Today, more than 2,700 Peace Corps volunteers are working to train men and women in 72 countries to provide for their own needs, as well as to promote mutual understanding between Americans and other cultures.

It gives me great pride to know that the Peace Corps and the people of Wisconsin have a strong relationship. Right now, there are 289 Peace Corps volunteers from Wisconsin, including 137 volunteers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison—more volunteers than any other university in the Nation. The State of Wisconsin can also be proud that the university served as a training ground for many groups bound for service in the early years of the Peace Corps.

To better illustrate the work that Wisconsinites do for the Peace Corps, I would like to share this story of great accomplishment. In August 2004, for the first time, the Peace Corps honored returned volunteers with an award recognizing efforts to promote a better understanding by Americans of other cultures. This award was presented to the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since 1987, the group has raised money by selling calendars with pictures of Peace Corps experiences from around the world. The money is used to promote grassroots projects in countries where the volunteers served. The group also works to raise awareness about the Peace Corps and participates in charity events.

This story is both an inspiration and a call to further service. The \$98,000 that the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin-Madison donated over a 2-year period to the Peace Corps Partnership Program is a wonderful and meaningful achievement. It is my hope that other people in Wisconsin and throughout the United States will view these returned volunteers as role models.

In closing, I wish to thank the 171,000 Americans who have served in the Peace Corps since 1961 and extend special recognition to the 4,409 Wisconsinites counted among that number. The work of the Peace Corps has made an extraordinarily valuable difference to so many people throughout the world.

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN SCIENCE WEEK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, it is with great honor that I rise today to publicly recognize South Dakota's Women in Science Conference that is taking place March 7–11, 2005.

Hosted by the National Weather Service, this conference introduces

junior and senior high school females to the multitude of opportunities available to women in science- and math-related occupations. Studies indicate that, while females thrive in science and mathematics in grade school, far too frequently female students lose interest in these subjects by the time they reach graduation. As Kristine Thompson, a geologist and curator of the Mammoth Site's In-Situ Bonebed notes, "In the past, many girls and young women with an interest in science and math often were redirected to other fields. Although women account for half of the work force, they constitute less than 20 percent of scientists."

Consequently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's, NOAA, National Weather Service forecast offices in Aberdeen, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls, in conjunction with local and State agencies, schools, and businesses, are cohosting Women in Science conferences throughout South Dakota. These symposiums, created 5 years ago by the Aberdeen National Weather Service, are designed to foster personal connections between accomplished professional women scientists and female students. The Women in Science Conference creates a unique forum where successful female scholars and professionals meet and hopefully inspire young women to continue developing and cultivating their interests in the natural and physical sciences. To demonstrate the significance of these events, Governor Mike Rounds, by Executive Proclamation, declared this week "Women in Science Week in South Dakota."

Among the notable guests featured throughout the week is keynote speaker Karen Stoos. Karen is a native of Hoven, SD, and is currently a biologist at the Genetics and Molecular Biology Branch of the National Human Genome Research Institute in Bethesda, MD. Other presenters' areas of expertise span the fields of geology, animal science, engineering, medicine, and metrology. Additionally, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Weather Service, and the Girl Scouts will have exhibits and representatives in attendance. More than 1,000 seventh through twelfth-grade students and teachers are already registered to attend.

I am proud to have the opportunity to share with my colleagues this exciting and significant series of events, and I am very pleased that the conference's efforts are being publicly honored and celebrated. I strongly commend the hard work and dedication of the National Weather Service and all of the sponsors of the Women in Science Conference, as their contributions will positively impact the lives of so many young women in South Dakota.

COMMENDING IFES

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, we are all very impressed by the results of the

Iraqi elections in January. The results exceeded our expectations, and I am hopeful it is evidence that Iraq is moving toward democracy. I wanted to add my voice to the letter sent by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice commending IFES. Without the tremendous work of our troops who provided security at over 10,000 polling places around Iraq and the work of IFES, these historic elections would not have happened. I ask unanimous consent that the letter from Secretary Rice to IFES President Richard Soudriette dated February 28, 2005, be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2005.

Mr. RICHARD SOUDRIETTE,
President, International Foundation for Election Systems, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SOUDRIETTE: On behalf of the Department of State, I would like to offer my thanks for the International Foundation for Election Systems' role in supporting the recent elections in Iraq. On January 30 we saw millions of Iraqis brave intimidation and threats of death to demonstrate their commitment to democracy. We are heartened by this process for the future of vibrant, thriving democracy in Iraq.

The success of this first step in Iraq's transition to democracy is due in no small part to your organization's diligence and the dedication of your highly skilled staff. IFES's guidance on election regulations and operations, complaints adjudication, and public information not only helped to ensure transparency but also served to buoy confidence that these historic elections were indeed credible and transparent. Additionally, IFES's continuing role in building the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq's capacity for future electoral events will buttress Iraq's evolving democratic institutions.

Thank you again for your great contribution to the future of Iraq. Together, we will help the Iraqi people realize their dream of living in a free and democratic society.

Sincerely,

CONDOLEEZZA RICE.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CASUALTIES IN IRAQ

• Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, 1,500 American service men and women have been killed in Iraq, and more than 11,000 have been wounded.

We were all moved by the Iraqi elections last month. I and all Americans support the creation of a legitimate, functioning Iraq Government that guarantees the rights of all Iraqis. We all want democracy in Iraq to take root firmly and irrevocably.

But we also want to know when we will have achieved our mission in Iraq and when our 135,000 soldiers will be able to return home with dignity and honor.

At a March 1 hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Abizaid, the leader of the Central Command, gave the clearest indication so far about when our mission might end.

General Abizaid said, "I believe that in 2005, the most important statement

that we should be able to make is that in the majority of the country, Iraqi security forces will take the lead in fighting the counterinsurgency. That is our goal."

About the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces, General Abizaid said, "I think in 2005 they'll take on the majority of the tasks necessary to be done."

If the Iraqis make the significant progress this year that General Abizaid expects, it is perfectly logical to expect that a large number of American troops will be able to return home.

Our troops are clearly still needed to deal with the insurgency. But there is wide agreement that the presence of American troops is also fueling the insurgency and making it more difficult to defeat.

After the election, the administration announced that 15,000 American troops added to provide security for the elections would return, and additional troops should be able to return this year. Doing so would clearly help take the American face off the occupation and send a clearer signal to the Iraqi people that we have no long-term designs on their country.

In the February 28 edition of US News and World Report, General Abizaid emphasized this basic point. He said "An overbearing presence, or a larger than acceptable footprint in the region, works against you . . . The first thing you say to yourself is that you have to have the local people help themselves."

Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz made the same point in a hearing at the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 3. He said, "I have talked to some of our commanders in the area. They believe that over the course of the next six months you will see whole areas of Iraq successfully handed over to the Iraqi army and Iraqi police."

Before the election, the administration repeatedly stated that 14 of the 18 provinces in Iraq are safe. We heard a similar view in a briefing from Ambassador Negroponte.

If some areas can be turned over to the Iraqis in the next 6 months, as Secretary Wolfowitz indicated, it should be done. It would be a powerful signal to the Iraqi people that the United States is not planning a permanent occupation of their country. If entire areas are being turned over to the Iraqis, we should be able to bring many American troops home.

The road ahead will be difficult because the violence is far from ended. Sixty-six Americans soldiers have been killed in the 31 days since the election an average of two a day. But the election has produced new hope, and the Iraqi people are now forming the Transitional Government that will write a new constitution for the country and hold elections next December for the permanent new government that will lead their new democracy.

We all hope for success in Iraq, and appropriate withdrawals of our forces can clearly be an important factor in achieving that success.