

deter gun violence and therefore reduces the chance that adolescents are exposed to such crimes.

In addition, Congress can make it more difficult for potential criminals to gain access to dangerous firearms. Under current law, when an individual buys a handgun from a licensed dealer, there are federal requirements for a background check to insure that the purchaser is not prohibited by law from purchasing or possessing a firearm. However, this is not the case for all gun purchases. For example, when an individual wants to buy a handgun from another private citizen who is not a licensed gun dealer, there is no requirement that the seller ensure the purchaser is not in a prohibited category. This creates a loophole in the law, making it easy for criminals, terrorists, and other prohibited buyers to evade background checks and buy guns from private citizens often at organized gun shows. This loophole creates a gateway to the illegal market because criminals know they will not be subject to a background check when purchasing from another private citizen even at a gun show. It is important that Congress close this "gun show loophole" to help stop the flow of dangerous firearms to prohibited buyers who may use them in violent crimes.

Much more can be done to break the cycle of gun violence that plagues many of our communities. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass common sense legislation that will help to achieve this goal.

TRIBUTE TO SGT RUSSELL J. VERDUGO

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I rise in honor of a fallen soldier who has paid the highest price in defense our freedom, SSG Russell J. Verdugo of the 767th Ordnance Company died on the 23rd of May, 2005 in Baghdad, Iraq when an improvised explosive device detonated as he was responding to a call to dismantle the bomb. I would like to take this moment to salute his patriotism and his sacrifice.

Russell Verdugo deserves the highest gratitude of this body and the entire Nation. His sacrifice reminds us that freedom is so precious because of its incredibly high cost. My prayers go out to his mother, Susan Stanley, and his wife, Kari, who grieve the loss of a son and a husband and to all of the family, friends, and neighbors who are touched by his passing. I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Sergeant Verdugo. The love of country and the dedication to service shared by many of it citizens is the great strength of our Nation, and we can all be very proud of patriots such as Russell Verdugo.

NOMINATION OF ALICE S. FISHER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I have notified Senate leadership of my

intent to object to any unanimous consent request relating to the nomination of Alice S. Fisher to the position of Assistant Attorney General. This action has nothing to do with Ms. Fisher or her qualifications for the position to which she has been nominated. I have taken this action because there are a number of outstanding issues regarding the activities and operation of the Justice Department that should be resolved before considering this nomination. I am hopeful that, with the cooperation of the Justice Department, these issues can be resolved shortly.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF PAUL SINDERS

• Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to inform my colleagues of the retirement of a fixture of Clay city schools for the past 41 years and faithful friend, Mr. Paul Sinders.

Paul Sinders began his career as an educator in the fall of 1964 at the Clay City Elementary School. He taught fifth grade and moved to Clay City Jr./Sr. High School the following year. This marked the beginning of a remarkable career in which Paul served the Clay community school system in countless capacities. He taught science, math, and health to the junior high students before moving on to instruct health, physical education, and driver education classes in the high school. Additionally, he took time to coach the boys freshman and junior varsity basketball teams, and represented the school as athletic director and guidance director. In 1977, Paul took the reigns as principal of Clay City Jr./Sr. High School.

For the past 28 years Paul has worked extremely long hours overseeing the operations of Clay City High School. In 1992, he was selected as the Principal of the Year in the IASP District 8. In addition, he served as president of the Indiana Association of School Principals of District 8 in 1994-1995. Currently, Paul is on the board of directors for the Clay County Community Foundation and the Wabash Valley Youth for Christ. He is on the advisory board for the Clay City Center for Family Medicine and is a Support Committee Member for the Clay City Area Youth for Christ. He is a member of the Indiana Association of School Principals and Phi Delta Kappa.

Throughout his illustrious career, Paul has been blessed with the consistent support of his wife, Shari, and his children: Annette Ream, Chip Sinders, Natalie Wolfe, Bethany Stoelting, and Justin Sinders. I join his family, friends, and colleagues now in adding my blessing as he embarks on this new chapter in his life.

COMMENDING CHIEF JUDGE JOHN W. BISSELL, U.S. DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

• Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I express my sincere appreciation to Chief Judge John W. Bissell for his more than 20 years of outstanding service as a Federal District Court Judge in New Jersey. He is a truly distinguished jurist who represents the best of the New Jersey legal community. Judge Bissell has a depth of experience and a knowledge of both civil and criminal law that few can rival. He also has a keen legal mind and a compassionate understanding of people. Judge Bissell approaches each and every case before him with thoughtfulness and care. Indeed, he has excelled because of his deep appreciation that every case, no matter how small, matters greatly to all those who appear before him. And I believe that it is this understanding that has made Judge Bissell an outstanding Federal District Court Judge.

On behalf of the people of New Jersey, I express my sincere gratitude to Judge Bissell for his many years of distinguished service.●

MOCK ELECTION BUT REAL RESULTS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, as we wind down from a Presidential election year and gear up for yet another cycle of congressional elections, it seems appropriate to take a moment and consider how important an educated electorate is to this country. It is the bedrock upon which our Founding Fathers built a fledgling government, creating a Constitution that functions with protean efficiency—inextricably bound to the necessity of knowledgeable and civic-minded citizens. I am proud to make public mention of the Moscow, ID, chapter of the League of Women Voters, which has won an award from the League of Women Voters of the United States for its efforts to educate future voters in north Idaho.

The League of Women Voters promotes a mock election program through its State and local chapters across the Nation. The Moscow chapter conducted what can only be described as a phenomenal month-long series of events and outreach that culminated in late October in the most successful "mock election" in Idaho and one of the top in the Nation. They were able to register and have almost 2900 first through twelfth-graders in the Moscow area vote. And I am relieved to add that I was reelected by these young people.

The chapter worked to bring together local, county, and State officials, teachers, parents, and volunteers to provide these students with a comprehensive and highly educational election experience. The students were given issues ballots, information about the candidates, Web site curriculum, sample ballots and had to abide by all

of the State voting laws. Students were taught their voting rights under the Help America Vote Act, and the overall efforts were so successful that the League of Women Voters of Idaho and the Idaho Secretary of State's office asked them to share their mock election handbook for instruction and use by other organizations in the State.

The Moscow chapter went above and beyond in its outreach efforts, bringing in students from an alternative high school and made voting accessible for handicapped students under Americans For Disabilities Act laws. In the successful aftermath, the effect has been felt throughout the community as private schools and home-schooling parents have expressed interest in becoming involved in the future. Even more noteworthy, although parents were not required to participate, more parents volunteered than in past years, and it could be surmised that this "mock election" contributed to the historically high voter turnout in that area of Idaho for the real elections in November.

Thomas Jefferson said: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." I congratulate the outstanding efforts of the League of Women Voters of Moscow on its remarkable effort to reinforce civic education and voter responsibility in Idaho's children.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:19 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2744. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 159. A concurrent resolution recognizing the sacrifices being made by the families of members of the Armed Forces and supporting the designation of a week as National Military Families Week.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h, and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group, in addition to Mr. KOLBE of Arizona, Chairman, and Ms. HARRIS of Florida, Vice Chairman, appointed on April 14, 2005: Mr. DREIER of California, Mr. BERMAN of California, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. MANZULLO of Illinois, Mr. WELLER of Illinois, Mr. REYES of Texas, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2744. An act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 6. An act to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable, and reliable energy.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2513. A communication from the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Potomac Electric Power Company, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Company's Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2004; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2514. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report prepared by the Department's Office of Inspector General; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2515. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 16-73, "Closing of a Public Alley in Square 527, S.O. 03-1181, Act of 2005"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2516. A communication from the Chairman, United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-annual Report of the Commission's Inspector General; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2517. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the semiannual report of the Office of Inspector General for the period of October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2518. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Department's Inspector General; to the Committee

on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2519. A communication from the Chairman, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Board's Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2520. A communication from the Chairman, Board of Governors, Postal Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Office of Inspector General for the period ending March 31, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2521. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Management Response for the period of October 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2522. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Department's Inspector General for the period ending March 31, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2523. A communication from the Senior Procurement Executive, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-04; FAR Case 2003-008; Share-in-Savings Contracting" (RIN9000-AJ74) received on June 3, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2524. A communication from the Acting Director, Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Redefinition of the San Francisco, CA, Nonappropriated Fund Wage Area" (RIN3206-AK26) received on June 3, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2525. A communication from the Acting Director, Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives" (RIN3206-AK81) received on June 3, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2526. A communication from the Acting Director, Division for Strategic Human Resources Policy, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Excepted Service—Presidential Management Fellows Programs" (RIN3206-AK27) received on June 3, 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2527. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 16-75, "Closing of a Public Alley in Square 342, S.O. 03-5369, Act of 2005"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2528. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 16-76, "Closing of a Portion of Davenport Street, N.W., abutting Squares 1672 and 1673, S.O. 03-2366, Act of 2005"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-2529. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report