

areas, where meth use is particularly prevalent, are rarely trained to deal with the unique issues related to this drug. They put themselves into harm's way every time they go into a home to rescue a child, both because of the toxic chemicals to which they are exposed, as well as the combative and sometimes violent state of the addicted parents.

As was highlighted by Chairman GRASSLEY and Senator BAUCUS this morning, the current funding structure for America's child welfare system is outdated and ill-equipped to respond to the challenges of the methamphetamine epidemic. We need to look at how we can better help States and communities respond to the spike in the number of meth-related child welfare cases, and I am pleased that the Finance Committee will continue to investigate the Federal role in healing children and families who are plagued by this dangerous and highly addictive drug.

Again, I thank Chairman GRASSLEY and Senator BAUCUS for holding the hearing today. And, I commend the individuals who shared their stories of recovery with the committee. From their testimony, we saw first hand that treatment can work. We heard that education about the devastating consequences of meth use can help to prevent potential users from going down this path of destruction. And, we learned that far too many of our Nation's children are being put at risk in homes where meth is being cooked.

As we continue to address the important issue of combating methamphetamine abuse, we need to do more to protect America's children, to educate our citizens about the dangers of drug use, and to support effective drug abuse treatment methods.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' WEEK AND LAS VEGAS TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize National Crime Victims' Week, which began April 23 and runs through April 29. This year's theme is Victims' Rights: Strength in Unity. Victims of violent crime may never be able to forget the trauma they have suffered, but with unity and support, they will have a chance to heal.

That is why I would also like to acknowledge a powerful event that will take place in my home State of Nevada on April 28—the Take Back the Night March.

Take Back the Night started in the late 1970s as a way to recognize and protest the concerns women had about walking outside at night due to threats of assault, rape, and murder. Since then, the event has spread to almost every corner of the United States and around the globe.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of Take Back the Night marches and rallies are held each year—often in late April—to coincide with National Crime Victims'

Week. We have had events in Nevada before, especially on our university campuses, but this year is the first community-wide march in Las Vegas.

I am pleased to see this event expanding into the entire Las Vegas community. Take Back the Night marches are positive events that bring together communities and empower victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The women and men who have survived these crimes can see they are surrounded by strong and supportive friends, neighbors, family members, and advocates. As organized by the Rape Crisis Center, this Take Back the Night includes activities for children and families, music, food, an open microphone, and a peace rally.

I have been a longtime supporter of legislation to combat violence against women, including the landmark Violence Against Women Act, VAWA. I voted for VAWA in 1994 and its reauthorization in 2000 and 2005. Our society can never be strong unless all its members feel safe in their own homes and on their own streets. We must do more to stop domestic violence and sexual assault.

I appreciate the time and effort of every Nevadan who is taking part in this year's Take Back the Night March. I would especially like to thank the Rape Crisis Center and its dedicated staff for organizing this wonderful event. I look forward to working with them in the future to make our streets safer.

TRIP TO COLOMBIA, PERU, BRAZIL AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, during the period of April 7–16, 2006, my colleague on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator JEFF SESSIONS, and I traveled to Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic for a firsthand view on issues of immigration, drug enforcement, and trade.

On April 7, 8, and 9, we traveled to Bogotá and Cartagena, Colombia. Upon exiting the plane, we immediately met with Ambassador William Wood, who has been U.S. Ambassador to Colombia since August 13, 2003, and is a graduate of Bucknell University.

I was looking forward to returning to Colombia in that I had not had an opportunity to visit there since December 1999. At the time, President Pastrana was the President of Colombia, and I had the opportunity to discuss with him my concerns about the forcible eradication of the supply of narcotics and the status of peace talks between the Colombia Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC.

Traveling to Colombia this time, I was aware that Colombia was still facing many serious challenges. Many of these suspicions were corroborated by Ambassador Wood. Ambassador Wood stated that the United States sent Colombia \$600 million in aid in 2005. The purpose of this aid is to assist Colom-

bia against various drug cartels and guerilla groups which threaten Colombia's security. Colombia faces two leftist and one rightwing insurgent group that wage guerilla warfare, carrying out kidnappings, hijackings, attacks on civilians, and political assassinations. The primary threat that Colombia faces is from FARC. Ambassador Wood estimated that FARC is composed of 17,000 members and operates in approximately 40 percent of Colombia.

Senator SESSIONS and I were also made aware of some recent changes that have occurred to Colombia's justice system. Ambassador Wood stated that the new Colombian Justice system has instilled in the Colombian people a new level of confidence in the prosecution of criminals. The new system provides for live testimony through the implementation of an oral accusatorial system, whereas the previous system was nonadversarial and operated almost exclusively on the basis on written testimony. Ambassador Wood stated that the new system is now in Bogotá and three other municipal areas. Over 17,000 prosecutors and judges have received intensive training in the new accusatory system in 2005 from various U.S. agencies. The implementation of this new justice system demonstrates that the Colombian Government is serious about cracking down on crime and will no longer serve as a kangaroo court for the benefit of the cartels.

Ambassador Wood also noted several other significant areas where the Colombian Government has improved in the area of law enforcement. Specifically, Ambassador Wood noted that the number of annual homicides were at their lowest number in 18 years. The number of kidnappings is down 39 percent, and terror attacks are down 42 percent under President Uribe's administration.

Later during the trip to Colombia, we had the opportunity to meet President Alvaro Uribe and Colombia's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Camilo Reyes. I came away extremely impressed with President Uribe and his agenda for Colombia. President Uribe is a true Colombian patriot who has elected to take the battle to FARC and to try to eliminate the cultivation of illegal narcotics in his country. Based primarily on his success against narcotic groups, President Uribe was reelected President of Colombia on March 12, 2006, on a platform to defeat guerillas, eliminate paramilitary organizations, end narcotrafficking, and enhance Colombia's domestic security.

The first issue that Senator SESSIONS and I broached with President Uribe was the issue of narcotics. Approximately 90 percent of the cocaine that enters the United States and 80 percent of the heroin east of the Mississippi comes from Colombia. President Uribe agreed with us that the biggest problem in the war on drugs was lowering the consumption of drugs. President Uribe believes, as do I, that so long as

there are consumers of drugs, people will keep producing it. Despite this concern, President Uribe was adamant that Colombia, with continued assistance from the United States, would be able to win the war on drugs. President Uribe felt that so long as the United States supplied financial aid to Colombia for another 5 years, they will have taken significant steps towards eliminating cocaine production from his country.

During our meeting with President Uribe, Senator SESSIONS and I also discussed the recent actions that the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have taken on the issue of illegal immigration to the United States. I was very curious to hear President Uribe's opinion on how we might deal with the issue. President Uribe stated his belief that it was important for the United States to legislate carefully in this area in order to maintain a positive relationship with Colombia. President Uribe noted that the United States needed friends in South America in order to serve as a counterweight to Venezuela and President Chavez. The comprehensive Senate bill that originated in the Judiciary Committee, President Uribe noted, appears preferential to the House bill.

Senator SESSIONS and I also asked President Uribe about the problem of seasonal workers that emigrate from Colombia to the United States in order to work temporarily on farms and don't return to Colombia once their appointed working time period has elapsed. I was interested to hear President Uribe state that he understood the concerns that the United States has with seasonal workers that overstay the work period in the United States. President Uribe stated that Colombia currently has a good working relationship with both Canada and Spain and that he would like to implement that same system with the United States. I asked President Uribe to explain how Colombia was able to get their seasonal workers to return from Canada and Spain after their designated work period had elapsed. President Uribe stated that whenever Colombia sends seasonal workers to Canada or Spain, they keep very close track of where the temporary worker is working and for what time period he is permitted to stay. Seasonal workers also have learned that if they don't return to Colombia at the conclusion of the seasonal work period, then they will never be permitted to participate in an overseas work program again.

Despite President Uribe's approach on this topic, I still expressed grave concerns whether this incentive of returning to seasonal work would be enough to have seasonal workers return from the United States at the conclusion of their work period. President Uribe said he would consider having Colombian workers have microchips implanted into their bodies before they are permitted to enter the United States to work on a seasonal basis. I

doubted whether the implantation of microchips would be effective since the immigrant worker might be able to remove them.

I also asked President Uribe what new policies he would like to see the United States enact. President Uribe stated that the five nations of the Andean community, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia, are going through trying times. President Uribe felt that it was important that the United States maintain a good relationship with Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia to combat the anti-American influence of Venezuela's President Chavez. I had the opportunity to visit President Chavez in December of 2005 and agree that he does pose a threat to U.S. interests in South America. I still believe, however, that it would be prudent for the United States to deal directly with President Chavez in order to reach an understanding on some of our Nation's differences.

Finally, President Uribe discussed with us a recent vote that had just taken place concerning the protection of intellectual property rights among the Andean nations. By way of background, in 2003, President Bush announced the intentions of the United States to begin negotiating a free-trade agreement, FTA, with Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru currently benefit from the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, ATPDEA. This trade pact, which is set to expire on December 31, 2006, authorizes the President to grant duty-free treatment to certain products, with more than half of all U.S. imports in 2004 from the Andean countries entering under these preferences.

In a recent vote which just took place in the Andean community, the community voted three to two to protect intellectual property rights in trade agreements with the United States. Colombia, along with Peru and Ecuador, voted in favor of the protection of intellectual property rights, whereas Venezuela and Bolivia voted against the protection of these rights. President Uribe is concerned about whether or not Peru will still support the protection of intellectual rights once they elect a new President in the summer of this year.

Later in Colombia, Senator SESSIONS and I met Susan Reichle, Deputy Director of the USAID mission in Bogotá, and Guillermo Del Coillito, Jorge Droujo and Rosano de Riccardi, board members on Project Unidad Pedagógica Productiva Agroindustrial de Turbaco. During our visit to the project, we were told that the project was started in order to teach 300 displaced Colombian families how to generate income and garner employment through agricultural and agribusiness activities in Northern Bolívar, Colombia. This and other USAID projects in Colombia provide income and employment opportunities to rural commu-

nities which agree to give up the growth of narcotic crops and for those that are displaced by the country's continued conflict. These projects serve to instill these employment skills which they can market outside of the cultivation of narcotics. I left Project Unidad Pedagógica Productiva Agroindustrial de Turbaco with a favorable opinion of the work that USAID is performing in Colombia.

When we visited the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, on April 8, 2006, we reviewed the incident of February 13, 2003, when a small U.S. plane crashed in Colombia resulting in FARC taking hostage Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Tom Howes, who were under contract with the Department of Defense in the war against drug traffickers. Despite the best efforts by President Uribe to rescue these hostages, all efforts, as of now, have been unsuccessful. During our visit to the Embassy we were told that, if there were sufficient Department of Defense resources applied, the hostages could be located. As a result of this meeting, Senator SESSIONS and I sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld on April 10, 2006, requesting that he allocate additional resources toward the location of these men. In discussing this matter with the personnel at the Embassy, it was obvious that they wanted more resources for this effort as a successful outcome would clearly have a positive impact on morale and national credibility. One of the men at the Embassy said he thinks about the hostages every day. The Embassy people talk about these men as POW and MIA and there are plaques and signs displayed throughout the Embassy.

Senator SESSIONS and I also met with Robert Taylor, Assistant Regional Director in the Drug Enforcement Agency, DEA, and Admiral Alfonso Diaz of the Colombian Navy. Mr. Taylor and Admiral Diaz discussed the methods by which the Colombian cartels use to smuggle cocaine and other drugs out of the country. We were advised that the primary way that drugs are shipped out of Colombia is via the use of go-fast boats. Go-fast boats can carry up to 3 tons of cocaine and can reach high rates of speed. They are frequently used to transport drugs to Mexico, Central American and Caribbean transshipment countries, using refueling vessels to extend their range. Despite the advent of go-fast boats, the Colombian navy, in conjunction with U.S. agencies, was able to intercept \$25 billion in cocaine in 2005 as a result of their own faster go-fast midnight express boats, which can reach speeds in excess of 60 knots.

Both Admiral Diaz and Mr. Taylor stated that Colombian law enforcement has an excellent working relationship with the United States and all of its agencies. One of the primary examples of this is the sharp increase in the number of extraditions of Colombians to the United States. Since President Uribe took office in 2002, Colombia had

extradited 304 Colombian nationals and 11 non-nationals to the United States. In early 2005, Colombia extradited FARC leader Nayibe Rojas Valderama and Cali Cartel leader Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela. The zeal with which President Uribe's administration is waging the war on drugs left little doubt that it is in the interests of the United States to continue to assist him.

Senator SESSIONS and I arrived in Peru on April 10, 2006. I have had the opportunity to travel to Peru on four previous occasions, the last of which was on January 4, 2002. This was an optimum time to be in Peru, as they are in the midst of Presidential elections which had taken place the day before our arrival. We first met with Ambassador Curtis Struble, who was confirmed as Ambassador to Peru on December 9, 2003. He and his staff gave us a country briefing and informed us that Peru's poverty rate is approximately 50 percent, but that Peru's economy is starting to rebound and per capita growth rate rose in 1 year from \$2,100 a year to \$2,800.

Soon after our meeting with Mr. Struble, we were met by Oscar Marutua, Peru's Foreign Minister, and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, Peru's Prime Minister. I was especially impressed with Mr. Kuczynski, who is a graduate of Princeton University and worked in New York City for 20 years. He reminded me of our squash match 4 years earlier and commented on my "drop" shots.

One of our primary concerns was the status of Peru's recent Presidential elections. Prime Minister Kuczynski advised us that there were a total of 23 separate candidates running for President in Peru. Out of these 23, only 3 were viewed as serious candidates. Ollanta Humala, a leftwing candidate who had been receiving significant monetary support from President Chavez, was leading in the early election return with 30 percent of the vote. The other two primary candidates, Ms. Lourdes Flores Nano and Alan Garcia, were characterized by Mr. Kuczynski as moderates and were in a dead heat, each capturing about 25 percent of the votes.

Mr. Kuczynski explained that under Peru's political system, if no candidate receives 50 percent of the vote, then a run-off vote between the top two candidates occurs on May 7, 2006. Without question, it will be in the interest of the United States that either Ms. Flores Nano or Mr. Garcia prevails in Peru's election for President.

Foreign Minister Maurya stated that there are approximately 1 million Peruvians living in the United States. Of these, he estimated that 50 percent were residing in the United States illegally. Kuczynski suggested breaking the issue of immigration down into two parts: what to do with the people already in the United States and what to do with those who would like to go there.

Senator SESSIONS and I also met with Susan Keogh, Director of Narcotics Affairs in Peru. Ms. Keogh discussed the current difficulties the Peruvian Government was having in combating narcotics and the deleterious effect that narcotic cultivation has on the environment. Ms. Keogh stated that approximately 400,000 acres are being deforested annually for the cultivation of coca and other plants. On average, there are approximately 40,000 to 100,000 coca plants per 2 acres, which require about 2 tons of chemicals to be used for their production. Since coca is very vulnerable to diseases, coca growers cover the coca with pesticides which are very deleterious to the environment. Some portions of these chemicals almost always find their way into rivers and streams, as coca must be cultivated close to a water supply.

I asked what efforts the Peruvian Government is taking to combat these problems. Ms. Keogh remarked that the Peruvian Government hardly focuses on this issue and that the growth of cocaine and the effects on the environment was rarely mentioned during the current Presidential campaign. We suggested to Ms. Keogh that she and her colleagues, who were concerned about protecting the environment, should write letters to the editor of respected Peruvian newspapers expressing their concern over the growth of cocaine in Peru and the deleterious effects that this cultivation is having on the environment.

Senator SESSIONS and I arrived in Brazil on April 12, 2006. Immediately upon our arrival, we met with acting U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission to Brazil, Phillip Chicola, a Cuban-American who came to the United States in 1961 and graduated from Florida Atlantic University. Mr. Chicola stated that, although Brazil views the United States as an ally, the Brazilian administration has made building relations with neighboring countries in the southern hemisphere its first priority. He said that Brazil is seeking to redress U.S. influence by strengthening ties with nontraditional trading partners such as India and China.

Senator SESSIONS and I also asked Mr. Chicola about narcotics trafficking throughout South America. Mr. Chicola stated that, although Brazil is not a significant drug-producing country, Brazil does serve as a conduit for cocaine moving to Europe and Africa. Specifically, both Colombian and Bolivian drug smugglers attempt to transport cocaine over the Brazilian borders. Although Colombian drug smugglers have had some success in bringing narcotics across the border, the Amazon rain forest and various rivers provide natural boundaries against drug smuggling. As a result of these natural boundaries, drug smugglers have attempted to fly drugs out of Colombia and into Brazil. Mr. Chicola stated that the majority of drug smugglers now ship their cocaine through

Venezuela as a result of Brazil's shutdown law, which authorizes the Brazilian Air Force to use lethal force in the interdiction of aircraft suspected of involvement in drug trafficking.

Later during the trip we met with Under Secretary for South American Affairs Ministry for External Relations, Jose Eduardo Felicio. Mr. Felicio was an articulate, impressive man, who spent several years of his life working in New York City. One of the first questions we asked Mr. Felicio was how the United States can limit the destabilizing effect that President Chavez has been having on South America. Mr. Felicio stated that the Brazilian Government views Chavez as the legitimately elected President of Venezuela even though they do not approve of everything he says publicly. Mr. Felicio stated that, despite Chavez's harsh rhetoric against the United States, Brazil does not believe there is sufficient proof that Chavez is a disrupting force in South America.

I also asked Mr. Felicio what steps the United Nations Security Council should take in regards to Iran's attempts to develop nuclear arms in violation of the nonproliferation treaty. Mr. Felicio stated that, while Iran should cooperate with requests made by the International Atomic Energy Association, Brazil does not believe that Iran is being treated fairly because there is a double standard against Iran. While certain countries like Israel, Pakistan, and India are permitted to develop nuclear programs in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has been unfairly singled out.

The next portion of the CODEL took us to Manaus, where we spoke with Mr. Francisco Ritta Bernardino, the owner of many hotels throughout the Amazon and noted author of several books dealing with the importance of the Amazon ecosystem. A lawyer and entrepreneur, Mr. Bernardino told us of his meeting with Jacques Cousteau, the famous diver and undersea explorer who documented life in the Amazon from December 1981 to November 1982. Mr. Bernardino stated that it was during this time period that Jacques Cousteau convinced him that the greatest threat to mankind was not nuclear war, but the destruction of nature. Cousteau believed that if the destruction of the Amazon was not halted, mankind would be sacrificing the future of their children and grandchildren.

Soon after Mr. Bernardino's meeting with Mr. Cousteau, he set about the construction of the Ariau Amazon Towers. Mr. Bernardino stated that he built the hotel in the middle of the Amazon in order to help people become acquainted with the Amazon in a region untouched by people. The Ariau Amazon Towers are built upon seven wooden towers interconnected by raised walkways over portions of the Amazon River. These walkways connect the towers with various docks and paths that lead throughout the Amazon.

During our meeting with Mr. Bernardino, we inquired about the origin of the Amazon River flow. Mr. Bernardino explained that the Amazon River is created at the junction of the Negro and Solimoes Rivers near Manaus. He stated that the water of the Negro River runs approximately 3,200 kilometers, originating from the various tributaries that spill out of the Andes Mountains of Colombia and Peru. The water of the Negro River is completely black, colored from the collection of minerals and organic materials that it collects from hundreds of tributaries that empty into it from the rock beds of the Andes. Mr. Bernardino explained that, although the Negro River is full of acid and poor in oxygen, it fertilizes the surrounding shores with its rich minerals. In contrast to the Negro River, Mr. Bernardino stated that the water of the Solimoes River is colored light blue and flows from the Brazilian-Peruvian border. The Solimões River runs for about 1,600 kilometers, until it meets the black Negro waters where it merges to form the Amazon River in a floodplain about 80 kilometers wide.

The Amazon River runs 5,904 kilometers in length; its basins widening during the rainy seasons to as much as 100 kilometers. Mr. Bernardino explained that approximately 1,100 tributaries empty their waters into the Amazon and that the Amazon average width ranges from 2 to 30 kilometers, until it reaches a width of 230 kilometers when it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The flow of the Amazon river is so forceful that the waters of the Atlantic Ocean are pushed approximately 2 to 5 kilometers away from the shoreline of the Amazon basin by its free-flowing fresh water.

We also met with the National Aeronautical Space Administration, NASA, Project Liaison to Large Scale Biosphere Atmosphere Experiment, Josefine Durazo, about the effects the deforestation of the Amazon is having on global warming. Ms. Durazo explained that the Large Scale Biosphere Atmosphere Experiment, LBA, is an international cooperative research program led by Brazil and dedicated to the study of International Geosphere-Biosphere studies regarding the deforestation of the Amazon. She further stated that she worked with the LBA-ECO, which is a subproject operating under the LBA, funded entirely by NASA. The LBA-ECO is dedicated to gaining an understanding of how the ecosystem of the Amazon functions as a system and what effects the deforestation of the Amazon are having on climate control.

Ms. Durazo explained that NASA began funding the program in 1998 by constructing tower sites which measure carbon flux in various geographic areas within the Amazon. These towers, in conjunction with extensive support by Brazilian researchers, enable NASA to measure the flux of carbon levels during forest fires and lumbering

projects. As a result of this research, NASA and LBA have discovered that current logging efforts in the Amazon cover an area nearly equal to that of the portions that have already been deforested. Ms. Durazo stated that by using these techniques, NASA and the LBA will soon be able to determine the effect that the continued logging of the Amazon will have on the level of carbon dioxide being emitted to the atmosphere.

After our meeting with Ms. Durazo, I had my staff reach out to Michael Keller a physical scientist working at the International Institute of Tropical Forestry. According to Mr. Keller, carbon dioxide is responsible for the largest portion of the manmade greenhouse effect. Each year, there are eight gigatons, 1 billion tons, of carbon added to the atmospheric burden of carbon dioxide. Of those 8 gigatons, 1.6 result from land use change processes, such as the clearing of forest and savanna in the tropics. Mr. Keller estimates that .3 gigatons of the carbon emitted to the atmosphere occurs as a result of the deforestation of the Amazon. Accordingly, Mr. Keller and other experts believe that the deforestation of the Amazon is playing a significant role in the manmade greenhouse effect. NASA is continuing to study the data that they have collected in the Amazon.

Senator SESSIONS and I arrived in the Dominican Republic on April 15, 2006, and met for a team briefing with Peter Reilly of the DEA, Andy Diaz of the FBI, Michael Garuckis of the State Department, Jeff Radgowski of the Coast Guard and Timothy Tubbs of the Department of Homeland Security regarding issues of drug trafficking and immigration.

We were told at this briefing that the Dominican Republic's long border with Haiti, combined with its overstretched law enforcement agencies and geographic location in the Caribbean, make the country a prime location for drug traffickers. Although the Dominican Republic is not a major drug-producing country, it nonetheless acts as a transit point for cocaine and heroin bound for the United States from Colombia and Venezuela. The main trafficking points are by sea from Colombia, which lies just 360 nautical miles from the coast of the Dominican Republic.

We were also informed at this briefing that there are approximately 1.6 million Dominicans residing in the United States. In 2005, U.S. immigration authorities repatriated 4,918 Dominicans. Most of those returned to the Dominican Republic had served 4 to 9 years in jail in the United States.

After our country briefing, we traveled to see a training program run by the Hotel Association with assistance from USAID and the Peace Corp at La Romana Bayahibe Tourism Cluster, Romana Cluster. The Hotel Association is attempting to educate and train the local populace in order to make the Do-

minican Republic more attractive to tourists. The Romana Cluster is a community of homes built by USAID for displaced individuals on land purchased by the Hotel Association for displaced Dominicans.

While there, we met with Lisette Gill, the executive director of the Romana Cluster, and Rosa Garza of the Peace Corps. Ms. Gill explained that the Romana Cluster was started in 2001 by USAID to train the local community in marketable skills so that the area would be more attractive to tourists. Ms. Gill stated that the Romana Cluster receives approximately \$250,000 annually from the Hotel Association. Ms. Gill took us to a high school that was constructed by the Hotel Association for 120 students living in the Romana Cluster. Before the construction of this high school, we were told that Dominicans living in the area could not attend high school, as there was no public schooling available in the area.

Later that evening, we met with the Foreign Minister for the Dominican Republic, Mr. Carlos Morales Troncoso. I told the Foreign Minister that I had spoken to President Uribe about the problem of the United States of getting guest workers to return to their native country after they had finished working, and I was interested to hear his thoughts on the subject. Mr. Troncoso stated that the Dominican Republic had just begun a guest worker program with Spain. The Dominican Republic guest worker program was a 2-year program whereby the government would keep a log of where the worker would be working in Spain and where they could find him. Mr. Troncoso explained that, so long as the worker performed well and returned to the Dominican Republic at the end of the working season, then it would be permissible for the worker to work in Spain the following year. He stated that if the worker does not come back, that worker would be barred from being eligible for any future participation in a guest worker program.

Mr. Troncoso admitted that there is always the problem of some guest workers not wanting to return to the Dominican Republic, but nonetheless, the current system seems to be working well. Mr. Troncoso stated that, in 2005, Dominican Republic citizens working in the United States sent approximately \$2.8 billion back to their families in the Dominican Republic.

Senator SESSIONS and I also had the opportunity to meet with President Leonel Fernandez Reyna. President Reyna was a very impressive man who was born in Santo Domingo in 1953 and moved to New York City in 1956 where he attended elementary and junior high school. President Reyna returned to the Dominican Republic in 1969 and served as President from 1996-2000 but was not permitted to run again as a result of term limits. In 2003, however, the Dominican Republic constitution was changed, permitting President

Reyna to become President for a second time in 2004.

President Reyna spoke to us about the border problems that the Dominican Republic was having with illegal Haitian immigrants entering the Dominican Republic. President Reyna explained that, while the Dominican Republic's unemployment rate was 17.4 percent, Haiti's was approximately 50 percent. As a result of this, the Dominican Republic must constantly contend with Haitian citizens coming across the border looking for work. President Reyna stated that it was imperative for the Dominican Republic to encourage the expansion of democratic institutions in Haiti, in the hope that this would lead to political stability.

We returned to Washington on April 16 to use the second week of the recess to work on the immigration bill.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT KEVIN P. JESSEN

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to SSG Kevin P. Jessen of Paragould, AR. To those who knew him best, he was a loving husband and proud father whose life was filled with love and laughter. To his fellow soldiers serving on the battlefields of Iraq, he was a hero who, in the course of saving countless American and Iraqi lives, sacrificed his own.

His lifelong interest in military history and explosives led him to a career as an explosive ordnance disposal technician. It came as no surprise to friends and family that the young Arkansan, who spent countless hours as a child playing with G.I. Joe toys and bottle rockets, would become a soldier. He joined the ROTC while in high school and upon graduation enlisted in the National Guard before ultimately joining the U.S. Army.

Staff Sergeant Jessen's first of three tours in Iraq occurred shortly after Operation Desert Storm when he helped dispose of explosives left over from the war. In 2004, he returned through service in Operation Iraqi Freedom, only to return for a third tour 6 months after his second was completed. While serving in a foreign land seemingly worlds away from home, his heart and thoughts were undoubtedly never far from his wife Carrie and his 2-year-old son, Cameron. Between tours of duty, this battle-hardened soldier was often found changing diapers or handling bottle feedings in the middle of the night. It was the proud duty of a man who loved his family so very much, and it was symbolic of his devotion to them.

Throughout his time in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Jessen's role as an explosives ordnance disposal technician ensured that he was often called upon to disarm roadside bombs. Although it continually placed him in the line of danger, he selflessly saw it as his duty to help protect the lives of his fellow soldiers as well as the lives of Iraqi civilians. Tragically, while serving on a postblast

investigation on March 4, 2006, he was killed by a secondary explosion in Rawah, Iraq.

At Staff Sergeant Jessen's memorial service, he was laid to rest with full military honors. Hundreds of family, friends, and those wishing to pay their respects joined together to remember this young Arkansan and to honor the life he led. Along his funeral procession, members of a grateful community endured the cold weather to honor this fallen hero, many with hands held over the hearts and waving American flags. At the cemetery, the American flag that had draped Staff Sergeant Jessen's casket was folded and presented to Carrie and Cameron as a token of remembrance of the man they loved and the sacrifice he made on behalf of us all.

Although the 28 years that Kevin Jessen spent with us were far too short, I am hopeful that his friends, family, and loved ones find some solace knowing that he touched the lives so many. He set examples of devotion to family and country that we should all follow, and he led an honorable life of love and selflessness that will continue to serve as an inspiration to us all.

My thoughts and prayers are with Carrie, Cameron, and all those who knew and loved this fallen hero.

STAFF SGT. BROCK A. BEERY

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Warsaw, IN. SSG Brock Beery, 30 years old, died on March 23 when his armored vehicle struck a land mine 80 miles west of Baghdad. With his entire life before him, Brock risked everything to fight for the values we Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Brock decided to pursue a career in the Army in 1994, immediately following his graduation from Tippecanoe Valley High School. Remembered as a good student and a good husband, Brock took great pride in his work. He remained close to his family throughout his time in Iraq and planned to attend his younger sister's high school graduation in June. His father recounted to a local newspaper, "[Brock] liked his job. He liked challenges; he put his best foot forward every time. He gave his best to his family, too."

Brock was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was a member of the Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armored Division, based in Bowling Green, KY. This brave young soldier leaves behind his mother and father, Pamela and Roger Beery; his wife and 7-year-old daughter, Sara and Elissa; his sister, Hope; and his brothers, Joel and Tobey. He was serving his third overseas tour of duty.

Today, I join Brock's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to

make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Brock, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Brock was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. Today and always, Brock will be remembered by family members, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Brock's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Brock's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Brock A. Beery in the official record of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Brock's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Brock.

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.

In March 2006, Gregory Pisarcik was sentenced to life in prison in Santa Ana, CA for the murder of Narciso Leggs, a gay man. During the attack, Pisarcik repeatedly hit Leggs over the head with a champagne bottle. When police later found his body one ear had been cut off and anti-gay slurs were written all over his body. According to sources, police feel that sexual orientation was a motivation for the attack.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend