

Research, and staffed the Joint Steering Committee for Public Policy. Earlier, Mr. Leshan had worked in government relations at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and also at Duke University.

Through his contributions to public policy, health, and privacy, Mr. Leshan's work has exemplified the best of government service, and the impact that such dedicated service can have for the Nation as a whole.

I extend my warmest wishes to Mr. Leshan in his new responsibilities at Brown University, and on behalf of the Congress and the country gratitude for his outstanding service to NIH, Congress, and the country.

NOT ALL GUNS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, crime statistics indicated a growing threat posed by a military-style semiautomatic assault weapons in the hands of criminals. A 1994 report by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, ATF, determined that while assault weapons made up only 1 percent of the guns in circulation in the United States at that time, they accounted for up to 8 percent of the guns used in crimes, "thus making them preferred by criminals over law-abiding citizens 8 to 1." The ATF relied on data such as this to support the establishment of a federal ban on assault weapons. Such a ban was enacted by Congress as part of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act and was signed into law by President Clinton.

Following the enactment of the assault weapon ban, the National Institute of Justice, an agency within the Department of Justice, conducted a study that was mandated by Congress on the short-term impact of the statute. The study found that crimes involving assault weapons dropped 20 percent in the year following enactment of the law. Additional research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found deaths caused by guns dropped from 38,505 in 1994 to 29,573 in 2001.

Ten years after the assault weapons ban was passed, Los Angeles Chief of Police Bill Bratton said:

Since the assault weapons ban was passed in 1994, we have seen a 66 percent decline in the frequency of assault weapons use in crime. Violent criminals love these weapons because they give them far more firepower than conventional weapons that greatly increases their capacity to kill. We cannot allow these weapons to get back into their hands.

On May 8 of this year, two Fairfax County police officers were shot to death by an 18-year-old armed with multiple guns, including an AK-47-style assault rifle. Unfortunately, assault rifles like the one reported in this attack, as well as many other similar assault weapons, are once again being legally produced and sold as a result of

the expiration of the assault weapons ban.

In 1994, I voted to establish of the assault weapons ban and 10 years later I joined a bipartisan majority of the Senate in voting to extend the ban for another 10 years. Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming support of the law enforcement community, the ongoing threat of terrorism, and the bipartisan support in the Senate, neither the President nor the majority's congressional leadership acted to protect Americans from assault weapons like the one used in the attack on the Fairfax County police station. As a result, 19 types of previously banned military-style assault weapons are once again on the streets and in the neighborhoods of our cities and towns.

Congress must take up and pass common sense gun safety legislation to help prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future.

PASSAGE OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2007 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, first and foremost, I want to thank the members of the U.S. Armed Forces for their service to our country. These servicemen and women are performing admirably under difficult circumstances all over the world. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, along with their families, are making great sacrifices in service to our country. I am pleased to support a Defense Department authorization bill that will help these people who are serving the country with such courage.

I supported a number of good provisions in the Senate bill, such as the rejection of the President's proposal to increase TRICARE enrollment fees and co-payments, increased funding for training programs for our nation's authorized Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil-Support Teams, and increased funding for nonproliferation programs. Another aspect of the bill that I strongly support is the increased funding for force protection equipment. I have heard from a number of Wisconsinites over the years that they or their deployed loved ones were fighting for their country in Iraq without the equipment they needed. This situation is unconscionable, and my colleagues and I have worked hard to address it. The additional \$950.5 million for force protection equipment, including \$559.8 million for additional up-armored humvees and \$100 million for counter-IED vehicles, in this bill above what was requested in the President's proposed budget further ensures that our troops have the equipment they need to perform their duties on the ground.

I am pleased that the Senate approved the Military Family Support Act amendment that I offered with Senator JEFFORDS. This amendment is designed to assist military families struggling with the long-term absence of a family member. Under this legisla-

tion, the Office of Personnel Management is directed to administer a pilot program authorizing Federal employees, who have been designated "caregivers" by a member of the Armed Forces, to use their earned leave time in a more flexible manner while a family member is deployed overseas. This amendment also encourages the Department of Labor to solicit private businesses to voluntarily offer more accommodating leave time to caregivers affected by these deployments.

This bill also authorizes funding for a provision I authored in last year's Department of Defense authorization bill establishing the Civilian Linguist Reserve Corps, CLRC, pilot project. It became very clear after the attacks of September 11, 2001 that the U.S. Government has a dearth of critical language skills. The 9/11 Commission report documented the disastrous consequences of this deficiency which, unfortunately, we still have not made enough progress in addressing over 4 years after the 9/11 tragedy. I am pleased that this bill included the CLRC pilot project.

I am also pleased that I was able to pass a Buy American Act reporting requirement for the Department of Defense. This reporting requirement is similar to the reporting requirement that I have worked to enact for the past 3 years through the appropriations process and requires the Department of Defense to report annually the dollar value of any items purchased that were manufactured outside of the United States; an itemized list of all applicable waivers granted with respect to such items under the Buy American Act; and a summary of the total procurement funds spent by the federal agency on goods manufactured in the United States versus on goods manufactured overseas. Additionally, the amendment requires the Department of Defense to make this report publicly available to the maximum extent possible. I will continue to work to ensure a similar permanent reporting requirement is extended to all Federal agencies.

I also authored successful amendments to the bill that require the administration to develop a comprehensive strategy for establishing stability and fighting terrorism in Somalia and to study of the feasibility of establishing an United States regional combatant command for Africa. In addition, the bill includes an important amendment I offered to strengthen the Special Inspector General for Iraq.

Unfortunately, I was not able to get other amendments of mine adopted. I filed a straightforward amendment that would have made life a little easier for our servicemembers and their families when they are called up to duty or transferred. When this happens now, servicemembers often face cellular phone early termination fees or the prospect of paying the monthly bill for a cell phone they cannot use until the end of their contract—up to 2

years. My amendment would have treated these cellular phone contracts the same way that we already treat residential and automobile leases—give the servicemember the right to terminate the contract without being charged an additional fee. Despite the support of the National Guard Association of the United States, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, and the Military Officers Association of America, I was not able to get this amendment adopted. While I was disappointed in this result, I will continue to fight to make sure that servicemembers are not financially punished for volunteering to protect this country.

I was also disappointed that another amendment of mine was not accepted that would have extended the Department of Defense's ability to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farms. My amendment would have helped both servicemembers and schools served by the Department of Defense programs and local farms and communities benefit from the programs.

I also introduced amendments to the authorization bill that mirrored a bill I introduced last year; the Veterans Enhanced Transition Services Act, VETS Act. This bill includes provisions that would help ensure that all military personnel have access to the same transition services as they prepare to leave the military to reenter civilian life, or, in the case of members of the National Guard and Reserve, as they prepare to demobilize from active duty assignments and return to their civilian lives and jobs or education while remaining in the military.

The VETS Act is supported by a wide range of groups that are dedicated to serving our men and women in uniform and veterans and their families, and I was pleased to honor this support by introducing the amendments to the Defense authorization bill. We should ensure that our troops receive the benefits to which their service in our Armed Forces has entitled them, and while these amendments were unfortunately not included in the final version of the bill, I will continue to work to see that these provisions become law.

I will also continue to fight for the redeployment of our forces in Iraq so that our country can refocus on fighting the terrorist networks that attacked us on 9/11. I offered an amendment with Senator KERRY that would have required U.S. forces in Iraq to redeploy by July 1, 2007. While the amendment failed, I was pleased to be joined by 12 of my colleagues in addressing the fact that the President's policies in Iraq are damaging our country's national security. I am glad that more and more of my colleagues are recognizing what the American people already know—that we need a plan to redeploy our troops from Iraq.

Mr. President, I must note with disappointment that this bill continues the wasteful trend of spending billions of dollars on Cold War era weapons sys-

tems while at the same time not fully funding the needs of the military personnel fighting our current wars. I also think the Senate missed some opportunities when it rejected amendments that could have made the bill better. However, on balance, this legislation contains many good provisions for our men and women in uniform and their families and that is why I supported it.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate approved the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2007. I was pleased to vote in favor of this bill. I wish to express my deepest gratitude and respect to Chairman WARNER and Ranking Member LEVIN for their tireless dedication to making sure this legislation was passed in a spirit of bipartisanship. I am honored to be part of their efforts to build a stronger, safer America.

This legislation is good for our troops, good for Colorado, and good for America.

Our troops—the men and women who selflessly defend the democratic way of life both here and abroad—deserve nothing less than our steadfast support. I was pleased that we were able to show that support in a significant way with the passage of this Defense Authorization Act.

First of all, starting at the beginning of next year, all military personnel will receive a 2.2-percent pay raise. This extra money in the pockets of our servicemembers will go a long way as they continue to simultaneously serve our country and work to provide for their own families.

Second, the Senate has sternly rejected the Pentagon's ill-conceived increase in the medical fees for retirees. This is important to our long-term commitment to provide for those who have served our country with dedication and determination.

As part of this Nation's commitment to taking care of the families of our servicemembers, this legislation also authorizes a pilot program to promote early childhood education for military children affected by the relocation of military units or overseas deployments.

For our wounded soldiers, we are enacting strong requirements to make sure they receive an audit of their pay, and setting up a toll-free call assistance center for military personnel and next of kin who are experiencing pay problems. We need to take care of our wounded veterans, and this is one small step that will go a long way in meeting that goal. Along those same lines, we are also authorizing \$10 million for pilot projects to address the growing problem of post-traumatic stress disorder.

This legislation will also strengthen our troop levels for ground forces, adding 30,000 more troops to the Army's end-strength, 5,000 more troops to the Active-Duty Marines, and 17,000 more

troops to the Army National Guard. I strongly support these provisions.

Additionally, the Defense Authorization Act supports several programs that our troops rely on to successfully complete their missions. There is money for new helicopters to replace those lost in Operation Iraqi Freedom: \$71.0 million to purchase UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, and \$333.1 million to purchase CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

There is over \$950 million for protective equipment for our fighting men and women, including over \$550 million for up-armored HMMWVs.

This legislation also provides over \$2 billion in funding for new technologies to help keep our troops protected from improvised explosive devices, IEDs. Every American knows that IEDs pose one of the most terrible threats to the safety of our servicemembers currently in Iraq. It is our responsibility to protect our fighting men and women from that evolving threat to the best of our ability.

All told, the Defense Authorization Act of fiscal year 2007 is very strong on providing for our troops, and I wholeheartedly support that effort.

In addition, Mr. President, I am proud of the significant, Colorado-specific funding in this bill that will solidify Colorado as America's crown jewel for national defense and homeland security.

Specifically, the bill designates \$130.7 million for military construction projects in Colorado. This includes \$26 million for Fort Carson to build a combat services support complex for special operating forces and another \$24 million for the next phase of construction of the airfield arrival/depart complex.

At Buckley Air Force Base, \$10.7 million is authorized for construction of the consolidated fuels facility, and another \$7 million is authorized for a new Air National Guard Squadron operations facility.

At Schriever Air Force Base, \$21 million is set aside for construction of the Space test and evaluation facility.

And finally, there is \$42 million authorized for chemical weapons demilitarization construction for Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Funds for the Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, authorized in this legislation will bring another \$202 million to Fort Carson. There is \$118 million for the construction of a brigade combat team complex and \$84 million for the construction of a division headquarters for the 4th Infantry Division relocating from Fort Hood, TX.

I am also pleased to note that this legislation authorizes \$10 million to purchase interoperable communications equipment for NORTHCOM. Earlier in the year I added an amendment to the budget resolution to provide that \$10 million for NORTHCOM. Interoperable communications are absolutely necessary for NORTHCOM to be able to respond as quickly and effectively as possible to a homeland security emergency.