

I had the honor and opportunity to work with Sheila on many occasions when I was Hennepin County attorney. She was instrumental in creating and funding the Hennepin County Domestic Abuse Service Center. Hennepin County has about 1.1 million people, and this center is a landmark center across the country. It is a single place where women and their children can come. There is a play area for the kids. There are prosecutors there. There are police there. It is one place where they can get through the redtape and come to get help. The center is an international model for serving victims of domestic violence.

Sheila and I shared a particular concern for the fate of children who grew up in homes with domestic violence. There are deeply disturbing statistics on children who witness domestic abuse in their homes. These kids are six times more likely to commit suicide. They are 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault. They are 60 times more likely to exhibit delinquent behavior and, most chilling of all, little boys who witness domestic violence are 100 times more likely to become abusers themselves.

In my job as a prosecutor, I learned very quickly that when there is domestic violence, there is always a victim, the immediate victim, but it ripples through an entire family.

I remember a case we had in a suburban area where a man who had been abusing his wife killed her. There was a little girl, a little daughter who was about 4 years old. When he disposed of his wife's body, he brought the daughter with him in the back seat. A few days later, the grandparents came in from Russia. The woman was a Russian immigrant. They brought the deceased woman's twin sister, identical twin sister. This little daughter had never seen her aunt before. She ran through the airport when she saw her get off the plane and she said: Mommy, mommy, mommy. When you hear stories such as that story, you remember it is not about one victim, it is about an entire family.

Sheila knew those stories, and Sheila knew those statistics. But even more, she knew the names and the faces of the real children who witnessed and experienced abuse in the home. It made her all the more determined to do something about it because in America, of all places, kids should be free to grow up with safety, security, and peace of mind.

I remember the last time I saw Sheila. It was 2 weeks before that terrible plane crash. She and I had been asked to speak at a ceremony celebrating the new citizenship of Russian immigrants. It wasn't a campaign event. There were no cameras, even though it was about 3 weeks before one of the biggest elections in the country. It was just new citizens and their families.

We both talked about the immigrant traditions in our own families. She talked about her family growing up in

Appalachia. I talked about my family on the Iron Range with the Slovenian roots. As the event was winding down, I walked Paul. He wasn't supposed to be there. He was supposed to be in Washington. It was 3 weeks before this major election, and he was in this little room, with no reporters and no cameras, to greet these new citizens.

I always knew he was there for two reasons. One, he was there because he loved his wife and he wanted to be there to surprise her and support her. But he was also there that night because he truly embraced that immigrant tradition. He embraced the idea that a person could come to this country, an incredible journey to freedom, with nothing, and they could work hard, succeed and send their kids and their grandkids to college because that had been what had happened to him and that had been what happened to Sheila.

It was the same thing for Sheila and Paul with victims of domestic violence, people who had sunk to the lowest in their life, who had no home, who were out on the street, who were out hiding in a shelter. She worked tirelessly to ensure that victims and their families could begin their own journeys to freedom, that they could get a fresh start, with new opportunities, in a new and secure environment.

We will always miss Paul and Sheila, but thanks to their son David, who is going to be with us here this evening, and countless volunteers and friends from all over the country, they have carried on their legacy and their work. They have carried on their legacy to change the world and make it a better and safer place for everyone.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is concluded.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1585, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Nelson of Nebraska (for Levin) amendment No. 2011, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Kennedy) amendment No. 3058 (to amendment No. 2011), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements.

Reid (for Kennedy) amendment No. 3109 (to amendment No. 3058), to provide for certain public-private competition requirements.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I understand that later in the afternoon there will be probably two votes, one on the Mikulski-Kennedy amendment and probably a vote on final passage; am I correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The amendments that are now scheduled for a vote are the substitute amendment and final passage.

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: I was under the impression we had a vote agreed upon.

Mr. President, I understand there has been an agreement with the leadership that we will dispose of this amendment at the hour of 5:30. In any event, is the time divided between now and 5:30?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time is not divided.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I desire to talk on the amendment that is sponsored by Senator MIKULSKI, myself, and a number of others, which is an amendment to the Defense authorization bill. I see the ranking member of the committee. If he had other business he wanted to deal with, obviously, I would withhold.

Mr. President, at the end of last week, on Thursday evening, there was an excellent presentation on this issue before the Senate by Senator MIKULSKI. I addressed the Senate on Friday on this issue, and I am going to take a few minutes this afternoon.

This is an exceedingly important issue. It relates to the underlying concept of our national security and our national defense. In this legislation, we are authorizing some \$675 billion, which is essentially the backbone of our defense. What this amendment deals with is the personnel who will be working on the tanks, the planes, and the military hardware which needs to be conditioned and updated and improved so it is available and accessible to those men and women who are involved in defending this country. These are the employees who work primarily in the Defense Department.

There is a phenomenon that has arisen that works to discriminate against these excellent workers. They are not only excellent workers but a third of them are veterans. A third of them are veterans. These are men and women who have worn the uniform of our country and have decided that they want to continue in public service and so, therefore, have brought their skills and their training they have achieved in the military to give attention to the Defense Department. This is probably the highest percentage of veterans in any undertaking or employment base we have in this country, because these individuals, highly patriotic, highly motivated, highly skilled, want to continue their service to the country.

Basically, what they are asking is for an opportunity to continue service within the Defense Department, working on the various challenges and contracts which come before the Defense Department. This chart shows that thousands of veterans could lose their

jobs under the outsourcing rules. That is what this amendment is about. We are going to get fairness in competition so these workers are treated fairly and the taxpayer is treated fairly, and we get the dollar value for the taxes paid, and the workers will be treated fairly.

Under the current system, the rules that have been developed by the administration undermine that sense of fairness for these workers—a third of whom, as I said, are veterans. That is the issue. Thirty-four percent of the civilian defense employees are veterans. This amendment ensures that these 226,620 dedicated Americans who have served our country will not lose their jobs because of unfair outsourcing. That is what we are talking about—unfair outsourcing.

Let me explain how this works. The chart probably demonstrates it as well as it can be demonstrated. This is the Government here for some particular Defense Department work. You can see from the green box that the Government can provide a lower rate for the cost of providing the service, and can also do it with higher skills than on the private bid. But the fact that the Government employees have health insurance or retirement benefits adds an additional cost to their proposal, which puts them out of competition. So what we are finding now with these new rules and regulations is the bids and contracts are going to companies that are dropping their health care and dropping their pension programs and dropping other security benefits so they can come up underneath the Government contract. Essentially, this is a race to the bottom.

In a country where we have 47 million Americans who are uninsured, and we are having a major national debate about covering children, why are we providing more financial incentives to companies to drop their health insurance? That is what we are doing. The ones who are losing out are, by and large, the ones who have served in the Armed Forces of our country.

This isn't only on Government bids; this could be a responsible contractor and an irresponsible contractor. Maybe a responsible contractor can do it more efficiently even than the Federal Government, but look how it works. If you have a responsible contractor who is trying to provide some benefits, limited benefits, or good benefits for their employees—and that is the combination we are talking about, health and retirement; those are the two, retirement and health—we are seeing those contractors who can provide the services more efficiently and better. Nonetheless, the bid will go to the irresponsible contractor. So this works against responsible contractors and it works against veterans working in the Defense Department.

What we are saying with this amendment—and there are other provisions in the amendment—but what we are saying is let the competition take place. Let the competition take place

between the workers in the Defense Department and the private sector, but let them have an even playing ground. Let us exclude the health insurance and retirement benefits. Let us have the competition out there and the best person win. The best bid wins the contracts.

Why would we want to continue to drive out these contracts? We can show what has been happening over time to these workers. We saw in 2004, because of these new regulations, where Federal employees lost on 10 percent of these bids; in 2005, it went to 30 percent; and the best estimate now is it is going all the way up to 78 percent, and basically it is about this issue—not completely, but it is fundamentally about this issue.

Now, in the amendment there are other provisions which I will mention very briefly. Provisions of this amendment, which have been debated on the floor and acted on in the Senate at other times, have also had strong bipartisan support, and I will mention those very briefly.

At the present time, a private contractor can appeal an unfair decision if there is a belief by the private contractor that there is unfairness in terms of the decision in the competition with the Federal workers. They are entitled to get an appeal. On the other hand, if the Federal workers believe it is an unfair competition, they have no right to do so. They have no right to do so. This restores that right. This represents a very similar provision that was sponsored by Senator COLLINS in 2004, and Senators CHAMBLISS, WARNER, THOMAS, and VOINOVICH have also supported appeal rights in the past for Federal employees in previous appropriations legislation. I am not speaking for them, but it is an indication that this is an issue that has been before the Senate at other times and there has been bipartisan support for it.

On this point here—can renew a contract without recompetition—if they have a follow-on contract, they can renew that, if it is a private contract. With the Federal workers, they do not have that right to do that at the present time. So under the outsourcing provisions, these Federal workers are shortchanged.

The provision regarding the submission of the competitive bid that requires the Federal workers to follow procedural and administrative provisions actually increases the cost of their bids. Again, at the request of the employees, all they wish to do is have the same kind of “most competitive bid” they can offer. They would like that one to be on the table so we will get the best in terms of productivity and skill and also get the best in terms of savings for the taxpayers. But they are denied that right.

We provided, through the Appropriations Committee, those protections. Those provisions had been added through the Appropriations Com-

mittee. But what has happened is, as the Appropriations Committee process goes along, these provisions expire, and so we have to come back to them. We have to win them again every time. Because if they are added on the appropriations, they do not continue to last and we have to refight those issues.

Finally, there are what they call “quota provisions,” which have been put on by OMB and require a certain amount of quotas in terms of the private contracting, which obviously provides some unfairness to the workers and, secondly, to the public and the taxpayers.

These are basically the provisions we have in the legislation. The primary one we have talked about today has been on this competition we have had for the benefit cost. This is the overarching issue and question.

We are going to have a good national debate during the Presidential elections of 2008 about how we are going to address the problems of cost in this country on health care. We have gone from \$1.3 trillion to \$2.3 trillion in the last 5 years. We have added \$1 trillion worth of spending in health care and have added 7 million more people who are uninsured and there would have been a great deal more if we didn't have the CHIP program.

We cannot continue that as a nation. We are not going to be able to continue that. Our companies are not going to be able to; the costs in terms of local communities have gotten prohibitive. These involve real people and real sacrifices—real important considerations. We are talking about families. We are talking about, by and large, fairly treating people who served in the military. They had health care when they were serving in the military. They could have the health care when they retired. But the real question is going to be, now, when they are continuing to be a part of the whole defense and security of this country, whether we are going to treat them with the kind of respect they need, understanding they have families and they need this health care coverage. They are glad to pay for it and bargain for it. They have to look down the road in terms of their security and the security of their families, in terms of pensions in the future. They are glad to pay for that. But why we should be able to effectively cut them loose at a time of intense competition, I don't know.

I thank the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. LIEBERMAN, who has been involved in the different phases. I mentioned half a dozen different phases on this issue. He has been involved and engaged in these different aspects since he has been on that committee. I enjoy serving with him on the Armed Services Committee. He has been an eloquent and effective voice and has given enormous support to this effort. I see him on the floor and thank him for all of his help and assistance on this issue.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank my friend from Massachusetts for his eloquent, passionate statement and for his kind words. I appreciate it very much. In a short while, I will be adding my own few words of support for this amendment offered by the Senator from Massachusetts, the Senator from Maryland, and others—including myself.

I am privileged to be managing the bill until the chairman, Senator LEVIN arrives. I thought insofar as there are Members here on both sides, we would go back and forth. I suggest Senator SESSIONS, who is here now, go next. I will follow him.

I ask, through the Chair, of my friend from Alabama, how much time he would like to speak?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like 10 minutes.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Alabama go next for 10 minutes and then I be recognized for 7 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

THE RETIREMENT OF GENERAL PETER PACE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I had the honor today to be at the retirement ceremony, a few hours ago, for the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the armed services of the United States, GEN Peter Pace, and the installation of the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, ADM Mike Mullen. The weather was beautiful, indeed, in your State of Virginia at Fort Myer, the brass shining in the Sun, the music was stirring, and the uniforms of the services in their bright collars gave appropriate recognition to the passing of the torch from a Chairman proven to a new Chairman challenged.

It is always thus, I suppose. It was a thrill to see the commander of the Honor Guard one last time advance and say: "General Pace, the Honor Guard of the United States is ready for your inspection."

And General Pace did just that, it appeared with pleasure and satisfaction. That he is admired within the military cannot be denied. I understand last week they planned a surprise for him in the Pentagon. He was invited to come to a meeting for some business, it was suggested, and the halls filled with over 1,200 people who appeared and applauded him for 20 minutes. It was a true expression of the admiration and affection in which he is held throughout the military. Such support is not a surprise for anyone who knows that wonderful man.

He made a number of remarks at his retirement or change of command. He expressed his admiration for President Bush's willingness to listen to his advice the entire time of his tenure. He made clear President Bush did listen, and he was a regular briefer of the President; and General Pace's admiration for the President for standing by his commitments when he sent mili-

tary men and women in uniform into harm's way was quite personal and strong. In other words, General Pace is there. General Pace has been part of this process. General Pace has seen this Congress and this President authorize soldiers and send soldiers into harm's way. He felt a sense of appreciation for President Bush, I would say, for his willingness to not give lightly and to be totally supportive of those troops once they had been sent in harm's way.

He said the No. 1 question he is asked when he goes about with military personnel: Does Congress still support us?

I remember not too many months ago, a gentleman right out there caught me. His son was about to go to Iraq. He told me: Senator, make no mistake, those soldiers over there and in training to go over there are watching what you do like a hawk.

Secretary Gates, President Bush, Admiral Mullen were exceedingly complimentary of General Pace. They discussed his bravery as a young lieutenant at the battle of Hue in Vietnam. They lost quite a number of officers. He was moved up as a second lieutenant to be in command of the company they would have to have led. There was a bitter battle and he lost a number of marines.

He said he felt a debt to those marines, that he had spent 40 years of his career in the military attempting to pay off.

Several people made reference to that. He called those marines he served with, who lost their lives there, by names at that retirement ceremony. He indicated he still did not believe he had paid that debt that he owed those people who had given their full measure to our Nation's defense. But other speakers said he had, and they were most complimentary of him.

Recently, at a hearing, he was encouraged—let me say it that way—to retreat from a statement he had made that reflected his personal moral and faith beliefs; but he admirably, I suggest, declined to pander or to retreat from what he honestly believed, and he restated his personal values. That is the kind of man you want leading us, I suggest.

Our Nation is in the debt, I think, of GEN Peter Pace. He has given tirelessly of himself to support the policies of our country and to make those policies successful.

I say: Well done, good marine, well done.

Mr. President, on a different subject, I want to take a few minutes to note that on Friday, September 21, the Missile Defense Agency had a highly successful missile defense intercept. A target vehicle was launched from Kodiak, AK. It went into space. The interceptor missile was launched at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. It was, indeed, a realistic test of this capability. According to Rick Lehner, the spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency, "This was a very operationally realistic test."

In those tests we want to determine whether our missile defense capability will actually succeed in knocking down an intercontinental missile. These two missiles were launched, the target vehicle on a track not unlike what we would see if, for example, the North Koreans launched an attack. We launched our defensive missile out of California. And they collided and destroyed one another over the Pacific, like we planned, a bullet to bullet. There were no explosives in the "kill" vehicle. Just speed, guided by computers and sophisticated guidance systems, allowed those two to collide and to destroy the incoming missile.

The American people have a number of questions and misconceptions about missile defense. Some think we already have a complete missile defense system that can knock down incoming missiles. That is not so. Some think we do not have any capability, that this is a bunch of money being spent on programs that are never going to work. That is absolutely not so. We now have proven the technology. General Obering and his team at the Missile Defense Agency have continued to have success after success. We know we have the capability to knock down an incoming missile that threatens the people of the United States, who knows—with a nuclear weapon or biological or chemical munition contained within it.

This is an important matter for the United States that the President can know. If he is negotiating with some extreme nation that threatens to attack us with a missile and tries to use that threat as leverage or bargaining power, he can say: We are not afraid of you. You send a missile off and we will knock it down.

We are reaching that point in our capability. Intelligence tells us Iran also continues to build its systems and produces greater capability.

I would say, we need a site in Europe. I hope we continue to work toward that. We need to maintain steady appropriations and authorizations in this Senate to make sure our missile system that we have committed so many years to, and so many dollars to, is now completed, since it has been proven to be a good investment from the beginning.

I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity and note I am excited about this test's success. I do believe it is important for all of us in Congress to note that and make sure about our funding—which I think this year is a bit tight. The President took some money down out of missile defense. The Congress has taken some more. But I believe we have enough funding to keep this program on track.

I see my colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN. I note there are few in the Senate who have studied the issue more or who have been engaged in it longer than he. I know he and Senator THAD COCHRAN offered the resolution, not long after I came to the Senate, to

deploy a national missile defense system "as soon as technologically feasible." That was the language, wasn't it, Senator LIEBERMAN? Indeed, we are now deploying it. We are already deploying the system, and the American people took comfort last July 4, when the North Koreans launched missiles to demonstrate their power—they took comfort because of you and others, before I even came into the Senate—such as Senator SHELBY, my colleague from Alabama—who were pioneers moving that forward. We can now take comfort that we do have ability. It means a lot for our people and for the safety of America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend my statement, which I will now offer for 10 minutes instead of 7; to be followed by the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY, for 10 minutes; followed by the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, for 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I extend my time to respond to two things my friend from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS—one of my two friends from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, mentioned.

The first is the good news from the Missile Defense Program of the successful test last Friday. We wish we did not have to spend money building a missile defense, but the truth is that the number of powers, including a lot of hostile anti-American countries that have the capacity to fire missiles at us and our allies, carrying both conventional weapons and potentially weapons of mass destruction, is increasing and has increased.

The creation of this program has been controversial. The funding of it is controversial. But I believe, just as deeply as anyone can believe anything, that we will, particularly as we hear the success of the testing, look back on the investments we have made in this program and be very thankful we did it because it will protect the security of the United States from attack via a missile from the enemies that exist to our country and to our values.

I wish to just briefly echo what Senator SESSIONS said about General Pace, who has just ended his time as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I put an extensive statement in the RECORD last week without being on the floor. I just say now that this is a good man, a patriot who has served his country with a tremendous sense of excellence, of bravery, of honor, taking on risks and burdens to himself for the defense of America.

When he was appointed and confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, there were two pieces of history, two firsts. We are a country that

loves firsts because when people do something for the first time, it talks about the increasing openness, the reality of what we call the American dream. The one that was greatly commented on was Peter Pace was the first marine to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That was a historic first. The other—perhaps less commented on but a great story of America—Pete Pace was the first Italian American to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—yet another extraordinary accomplishment and act of service to our country from its Italian-American community.

Pete Pace served during a difficult time. He served with honor and integrity. He was intensely devoted to the men and women who serve all of us, and their families. He has maintained the fighting edge of our military going through a very difficult time, oversaw two extraordinary victories in Afghanistan and Iraq and then the post-Saddam war increasingly against al-Qaida in Iran and Iraq—very difficult times. But he leaves office now at a moment when, obviously thanks to the skill and bravery of the American military, there are some reasons for encouragement in Iraq, good reasons.

I thank General Pace, his wife, and his family for their service to America. We wish them well in the years ahead.

AMENDMENT NO. 3058

Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the amendment offered by Senator KENNEDY and Senator MIKULSKI and others, including myself, which will be voted on later today. This amendment would bring some commonsense reforms to the process by which agencies decide whether to outsource Federal jobs to contractors.

Sometimes, obviously, it makes a lot of sense for agencies to turn to contractors because they are able to perform certain functions more efficiently than the agencies could themselves. That is in everybody's interest, including the taxpayers'. However, in many cases, experience has shown Federal employees can perform the work just as efficiently or more efficiently than the contractors and deserve the right to bid when work is proposed to be outsourced. Additionally, agencies must ensure that inherently governmental work—in other words, work which is intimately related to the public interest—is performed by Federal employees and not by private contractors. That is why the Government was created.

The process for deciding when to outsource jobs has to be a careful one, it has to be fair to contractors, and it has to be fair to Federal employees. Of course, it has to be fair, most of all, to America's taxpayers.

The Kennedy amendment provides Federal employees the same right contractors currently possess to appeal outsourcing decisions. In other words, when a particular function is proposed for outsourcing, open to bidding by private contractors, there is a process—

and a good one—that has been created where Federal employees themselves may bid against those contractors for that outsourcing work. What the Kennedy amendment says is Federal employees should have the same rights contractors have to appeal outsourcing decisions. Why just have one of the competitors for the outsourcing have the right to appeal and the other one does not? To me, that is simply a fundamental issue of fairness.

The amendment also contains a provision to ensure that contractors competing for Department of Defense work do not receive an unfair advantage because they offer inferior health or retirement benefits to what we are offering to Federal employees. I do not think any Member of this Chamber would want employees of the Department of Defense to be at a disadvantage in competing for their jobs because they receive health and retirement benefits that we authorize and ordain from the Federal Government.

This amendment also addresses a concern I have had for quite a long time; that is, it sometimes appears as if the Office of Management and Budget pushes agencies to meet arbitrary numerical targets for the outsourcing of jobs. Decisions on outsourcing should be made on a case-by-case basis where it makes sense for agencies to outsource the jobs as opposed to giving them a quota of outsourcing and say they have to hit that quota.

Arbitrary numerical targets, I am afraid, take agencies off the path of pursuing other means of cutting costs. They overtax agencies already struggling to monitor work performed by contractors. I believe they sometimes, without cause, undermine the civil service, which we ought to be elevating as it is elevated in so many of the other industrialized developed democracies. Those types of numerical targets were prohibited by Congress in the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus appropriations bill, but the Office of Management and Budget seems to be continuing to pressure agencies to conduct competitions between Federal employees and contractors on a certain number of jobs each year. That is not right. The amendment before us makes clear that use of such quotas at the Department of Defense is impermissible.

These are all, in my opinion, sensible, modest reforms. They do not and they are not intended to prohibit the outsourcing of Federal jobs, which I support when it makes sense, but, rather, ensure that the process is objective, fair. It essentially puts both parties here on a level playing field.

The core provisions of this amendment have, in fact, received bipartisan support in the Senate over the last few years. I hope we can continue that support when the amendment comes to the vote today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT NO. 2905

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wanted to take this opportunity to say a few words about an amendment I have offered, No. 2905, that is cosponsored by Senators SUNUNU, KERRY, HARKIN, and BROWN. This amendment addresses a problem that is huge, that is going to continue to grow in coming years, and is something the Congress must address. All across our country, veterans of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan are going to come home with what we believe to be very high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder as well as traumatic brain injury. These are the signature injuries of the war in Iraq. I worry very much that we are not yet prepared to address this serious problem which not only impacts the returning soldiers, it impacts their wives, their kids, and their communities.

The amendment I have offered would develop a pilot program for State-based outreach to assist servicemembers and their families. The concern I have is that those who return home with TBI or PTSD are not going to get the care they need unless somebody makes contact with them and makes them aware of services and help that might be available. We can have all of the money we want allocated to addressing TBI or PTSD, but unless somebody goes out and brings those people into the system, that money is not going to do any good. I worry about that, especially for those returning soldiers who are in the National Guard who are not part of the active duty, who do not have a military infrastructure in front of them. I worry about soldiers coming home to small towns in Vermont and all across this country who suddenly find that their world is very different than the world they left, that they have nightmares, cold sweats, panic attacks when they go through a tunnel, and they don't know how to address those very serious symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

What this amendment does uniquely is create an outreach effort by which trained personnel from the National Guard or elsewhere are literally going to knock on doors and chat with the individual returning soldier and his or her family and get a sense of what is going on in the family, letting those veterans understand that what they are experiencing is something being experienced by tens of thousands of other soldiers, and there is nothing to be ashamed of about the kinds of problems that individual is having.

The essence of this program is its nature as an outreach effort, not to sit back but to aggressively go out, knock on doors, have dialog, and bring people into the system which might be able to help them.

This amendment is supported by the National Guard Association of the United States. They have pointed out that this amendment, with its unique emphasis on outreach, is a perfect complement to the reintegration and read-

justment policies laid out by the Yellow Ribbon Program in the previously adopted Chambliss amendment to the Defense authorization bill.

This is a very strong amendment. I look forward to having support on both sides of the aisle. If we are serious about addressing the problems of PTSD and TBI, we have to be aggressive in outreach. That is what this amendment does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

Mr. KYL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

COST OF PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, the recent incident in which Blackwater USA reportedly killed at least 11 Iraqis and wounded several others has prompted a long overdue examination of the role that private security contractors are playing in Iraq. An article in today's Washington Post titled "U.S. Pays Steep Price for Private Security in Iraq" helps to highlight the exorbitant mark-up that private security contractors are reportedly charging the U.S. Government.

Last week, the Senate accepted an amendment to the Defense Department authorization bill that I offered that will require Federal departments to report information to Congress on the total number of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, the companies awarded these contracts, and the cost of the contracts. The provisions of the amendment are drawn from the Transparency and Accountability in Military and Security Contracting Act, S. 674, that I introduced in February.

The American people have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent in Iraq and the role that security contractors are playing in that conflict. We need to make sure that security contractors in Iraq are subject to adequate and transparent oversight and that their actions do not have a negative impact on our efforts to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end.

I ask to have printed in the RECORD the text of the article from the Washington Post.

The article follows.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 1, 2007]

U.S. PAYS STEEP PRICE FOR PRIVATE SECURITY IN IRAQ

(By Walter Pincus)

It costs the U.S. government a lot more to hire contract employees as security guards in Iraq than to use American troops.

It comes down to the simple business equation of every transaction requiring a profit.

The contract that Blackwater Security Consulting signed in March 2004 with Re-

gency Hotel and Hospital of Kuwait for a 34-person security team offers a view into the private-security business world. The contract was made public last week by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee majority staff as part of its report on Blackwater's actions related to an incident in Fallujah on March 31, 2004, when four members of the company's security team were killed in an ambush.

Understanding the contract's details requires some background: Regency was a subcontractor to another company, ESS Support Services Worldwide, of Cyprus, that was providing food and catering supplies to U.S. armed forces in Fallujah and other cities in Iraq. And ESS was a subcontractor to KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton, which had the prime contract with the Defense Department.

So, Blackwater was a subcontractor to Regency, which was a subcontractor to ESS, which was a subcontractor to Halliburton's KBR subsidiary, the prime contractor for the Pentagon—and each company along the way was in business to make a profit.

Under the contract, Regency was to pay Blackwater \$11,082,326 for one year, with a second year option, to put together a 34-person team that would provide security services for the "movement of ESS's staff, management and workforce throughout Kuwait and Iraq and across country borders including the borders of Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey and Jordan."

Blackwater's personnel were to do more than just convoy security. They were also to run command centers in Kuwait and Iraq 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that were to control all ESS security operations; prepare risk assessments; develop security procedures; train ESS personnel in security; and even vet other Iraqi security forces hired by Regency.

But their main role was to provide "tactically sound and fully mission capable protective security details, the minimum team size [being] six operators with a minimum of two vehicles to support ESS movements."

Blackwater's pricing was to be on "a per person support basis, not including costs for housing, subsistence, vehicles and large equipment items," according to the contract. The team would be made up of two senior managers, 12 middle managers and 20 operators.

Regency was to provide Blackwater personnel with housing and necessities, including meals, as well as office space and administrative support. In addition, Regency would provide basic equipment, including vehicles and heavy weapons, while Blackwater was responsible for purchasing individual weapons and ammunition.

According to data provided to the House panel, the average per-day pay to personnel Blackwater hired was \$600. According to the schedule of rates, supplies and services attached to the contract, Blackwater charged Regency \$1,075 a day for senior managers, \$945 a day for middle managers and \$815 a day for operators.

According to data provided to the House panel, Regency charged ESS an average of \$1,100 a day for the same people. How the Blackwater and Regency security charges were passed on by ESS to Halliburton's KBR cannot easily be determined since the catering company was paid on a per-meal basis, with security being a percentage of that charge.

Halliburton's KBR blended its security costs into the blanket costs passed on to the Defense Department.

How much more these costs are compared with the pay of U.S. troops is easier to determine.