

IRAQ

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I opposed going to war in Iraq. I opposed the escalation of American troop levels. And I still do.

When the Bush administration proposed the escalation of U.S. forces in Iraq, the President said it would enable the Iraqi government to achieve political reconciliation. Our troops have done their part. Yet as we ask our troops to do more, the Iraqi government does less.

While we were fighting the surge, the Iraqi parliament was on vacation. While our troops were wounded, dying, and away from their families, Prime Minister al-Maliki was running up a budget surplus.

The Iraqi government has failed to make their country safer or more stable; they have failed to hold provisional elections, reform their oil laws or disarm the militias. This is a failure in leadership. The battle of Basra was a disaster. We know that many members of the Iraqi military fought bravely and steadfastly. But we also know that more than 1,000 deserted or refused to fight. Once again, American troops had to step forward to salvage the operation.

Our troops have performed bravely and effectively. Yet a great American military cannot be a substitute for a weak Iraqi government. It is time to come home. We must bring our troops home, swiftly and safely.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

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 strengthen and 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 the early morning of July 15, 2007, Miranda Greer, an openly lesbian woman, was brutally attacked in a Jackson, TN, bar. Greer had been dancing when a man approached her and, using a homophobic slur, asked her to leave. The man had apparently mistaken Greer for a gay male. When she clarified that she was a lesbian, the man punched her in the face. He then used the bottom of a beer bottle to jab her left eye, and broke it over the back of her head. Greer ended up with a blind spot in her left eye after the attack. Police have issued a warrant for the arrest of Tyler Mansfield, who was identified as a suspect according to the Jackson Police Department.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. Federal laws intended to protect individuals from heinous and vio-

lent crimes motivated by hate are woefully inadequate. This legislation would better equip the Government to fulfill its most important obligation by protecting new groups of people as well as better protecting citizens already covered under deficient laws. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

CAMERON GULBRANSEN KIDS AND CARS SAFETY ACT

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on February 29, 2008, the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act was signed into law, marking a historic moment for children, families and safety advocates across the country.

Nearly every other day in the United States, a child dies in a nontraffic vehicle accident. This legislation will ensure that cars in the United States are properly equipped with safety technology to prevent unintentional harm to children, promising safer cars, and safer children in New York and across the country.

I am honored to have championed the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act in the Senate, named in remembrance of a 2-year-old Long Island boy who was killed when he wandered behind the SUV his father was backing into their driveway. With this legislation we honor his memory, and the memory of all children taken from us by these tragic and preventable auto accidents.

I have met many parents, sisters, and brothers who have lost a loved one to a nontraffic-related incident. Their presence in this fight represents a true testament of courage. I would also like to thank the advocacy community—KIDS AND CARS, Consumer's Union and the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety—for their unwavering support throughout this push for passage. Together, these families and advocates played a critical role in raising awareness of this issue throughout Congress and across the country. Thanks to their tireless work, countless tragedies will be prevented in the future.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who joined me in supporting this important measure, especially Chairman JOHN DINGELL who was instrumental in helping this bill achieve passage in the House. Together we have shown that by working hard and finding common ground, we can produce legislation that will make a real difference in the lives of Americans.

As safety advocates and families gather in our Nation's Capitol to celebrate this seminal moment, I add to the chorus of thanks and praise for this long-awaited victory.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF REDLANDS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I want to recognize the Family Service Association of Redlands as it celebrates 110 years of service and support to the communities of southern California.

As a nonprofit community service organization located in Redlands, CA, the Family Service Association has been a hallmark institution of assistance and guidance to all who have sought its support. Founded as the Associated Charities of Redlands by community leader A.K. Smiley in February of 1898, this organization has a long history of care and concern for the needs of its local communities. After spending its first few years using funds from local contributors to assist the less fortunate, the organization opened a wood yard in 1909 to provide employment for those out of work. Later, contributors would donate buildings that enabled the organization to expand and establish the first community hospital, enabling more and more community needs to be met.

Today, the Family Service Association of Redlands provides a variety of services and programs to benefit needy populations of inland southern California. Their Home Again program has made a significant effort to address the growing issues of poverty and homelessness, through providing homeless families with permanent housing, employment, and family stability. Their Family Support program has made a similar dramatic effort at bringing fundamental goods and services to families in need; these include clothing distribution, rental and mortgage assistance, utility bill assistance, motel vouchers, emergency medical assistance, dental and vision screening programs, educational and training programs, case management services, and many others.

As the Family Service Association of Redlands celebrates 110 years of service and support to the communities of inland southern California, I am pleased to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing their more than a century of accomplishments.●

TRIBUTE TO JACK AND JAN MCGOWAN

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today I highlight the importance of acknowledging and celebrating extraordinary efforts by ordinary Americans who have led the way in protecting and preserving America's natural resources. I am honored to congratulate two inspiring "natural resource heroes" in my State of Oregon, Jack and Jan McGowan.

Jack and Jan McGowan have served as the executive director and associate director respectively of an organization called SOLV, which stands for Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism. Jack and

Jan's 18-year career with SOLV has seen many changes to the organization. Founded in 1969 by Oregon Governor Tom McCall, SOLV has focused on bringing together government agencies, businesses and Oregon citizens to work together on programs and projects that were meant to enhance the livability of our State. When Jack and Jan assumed leadership of SOLV in 1990, they worked out of their home and operated a very small organization of volunteers. Today, SOLV is the largest volunteer non-profit agency in the Northwest and has provided inspiration to similar organizations around the country and the world.

Oregonians pride themselves in doing their part to protect and conserve the State's treasures and natural resources. The first beach cleanup in the United States was held in Oregon in 1984. Since then, annual beach cleanups now occur all along the west and east coasts of our country and in over 100 countries around the world. Just last month, SOLV organized Oregon's 24th annual spring beach cleanup. All 362 miles of Oregon's coastline were canvassed by almost 4,000 volunteers who accumulated over 110,000 pounds of trash.

As a young Boy Scout, I was taught that one's duty was to respect and protect the world around you. I believe that we have a responsibility to encourage efforts in conserving our natural resources by responsibly using them, not abusing them. Jack and Jan McGowan have made major contributions to a proud Oregon pioneering spirit of innovation and conservation. What they have given back to their community is invaluable, for they have taught us that everyone doing their small part can achieve huge successes. I wish Jack and Jan well as they pursue future endeavors in their retirement.●

RECOGNIZING BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Black Hills State University as they celebrate their 125th anniversary.

Throughout the past 125 years, Black Hills State University, BHSU, has served the State of South Dakota by providing a quality educational experience. BHSU's commitment to education began in 1883 when the school was founded as the Dakota Territorial Normal School. With only 40 students and a 2-year budget of \$2,000, BHSU began its journey in becoming a premier educational institution in South Dakota.

The school underwent a name change in 1941 and became the Black Hills Teacher's College. In the early 1940s, the rise of World War II resulted in a nationwide decline in university enrollment. In response, BHSU chipped in and hosted the training operations for Air Corp Cadets for the Manpower Commission to assist the war effort.

After the war, the school rebounded and enrollment increased rapidly with the help of the G.I. Bill of Rights and BHSU's addition of graduate courses to its university catalogue.

Black Hills State University received its present name in 1964, and since, has continued to thrive in the South Dakota educational community. Now with three different colleges, an excellent academic environment, and many athletic opportunities, I am confident that BHSU will continue to serve the Spearfish community and the State of South Dakota for the next 125 years.

It gives me great pleasure to rise with the students, faculty, and alumni of Black Hills State University on this milestone anniversary and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

HONORING THE LOUISIANA HONORAIR

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge and honor a very special group, the Louisiana HonorAir. Louisiana HonorAir is a not-for-profit group that flies as many as 200 World War II veterans a year up to Washington, DC, free of charge. On April 7, 2008, a group of 95 veterans will reach Washington as part of this very special program.

I want to take a moment to thank all the brave veterans visiting our Capitol city this trip:

Durelle L. Allen, Sr.; Elmer R. Allison; Daniel Angelle, Jr.; Aline M. Arceneaux; Louis Armes; Charles Barber; Billy J. Barrett, Sr.; Charles Barber; Harry P. Becnel; Nicholas D. Bernard; James H. Booksh, Jr.; James L. Boulet; Valentin D. Breaux, Jr.; Warren J. Breaux, Sr.; John W. Broussard; Don L. Broussard; Emery Broussard; Tony Collette; Elmer Corkern; Jack H. Crouch; Frank J. Culotta, Sr.

Frank Deerman; Joseph I. DeVille; James G. DeVille; Julian A. Didier; Irving A. Domingue; Carl Dougherty; Charles H. Driggers; Russell J. Duet; Stanley T. Duhon; Donald K. Dutt; Robert M. Fleming; Ernest E. Fontaine; Lucius J. Forsyth, Jr.; Thomas R. Fournet; Paul U. Gary; Buren J. Gautreau; Hewitt B. Gomez; Gerald M. Gossen; Milton L. Guilbeau.

Donald C. Harmon; Didier J. Hebert, Jr.; Joseph W. Hebert; Adlar Hebert; James M. Jennings, Jr.; Joseph Kenner; Ruth M. Kilgore; Robert S. King, Jr.; William A. Koch, Jr.; John E. Landry; Wilfred R. LeBlanc; Walter A. Leonard; Grady A. Lewis; Robert H. Little; Thomas W. Logan; Jack P. Martin; Frank M. Mathews; Remie McGee, Jr.; Ray J. Melancon; John M. Menard; A.G. Moulder.

William G. Neef; Richard D. Nunez; Peter C. Piccione, Sr.; Charles D. Pierce; Ulysses J. Prevost; Wilfred Racca; Antoine W. Richard; Javis J. Robert; Forrest Sadler; Leroy Salsman, Jr.; Shirley L. Savoy; Lannie Scarborough; William P. Scott; Emmet G. Sellers; William R. Shelton; Robert D. Snyder; Hubert Sonnier; Albin H. Steiner; C. W. Sunday; Robert Sutter; Edward Swearingen.

Vernon O. Tekell; Joseph Thibodeaux; Andrew Thibodeaux; Wilbur P. Thousand; Emery F. Touns; Prudhome J. Trahan; Frances C. Trahan; Walton Trahan; William O. Walker; Camille E. Weber, Sr.; Charles Webre, Jr.; Richard M. Whaley; Walter C. White; Frank S. Williams.

While visiting Washington, DC, these veterans will tour Arlington National Cemetery, the Iwo Jima Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, the Korean Memorial, and the World War II Memorial. This program provides many veterans with their only opportunity to see the great memorials dedicated to their service.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a treaty which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE UNITED STATES-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT—PM 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents to implement the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (the "Agreement"). The Agreement represents an historic development in our relations with Colombia, which has shown its commitment to advancing democracy, protecting human rights, and promoting economic opportunity. Colombia's importance as a steadfast strategic partner of the United States was recognized by President Clinton's support for an appropriation in 2000 to provide funding for Plan Colombia, and my Administration has continued to stand with Colombia as it confronts violence, terror, and drug traffickers.

This Agreement will increase opportunity for the people of Colombia through sustained economic growth and is therefore vital to ensuring that Colombia continues on its trajectory of positive change. Under the leadership of President Alvaro Uribe, Colombia has made a remarkable turnaround since 1999 when it was on the verge of being a failed state. This progress is in part explained by Colombia's success in demobilizing tens of thousands of paramilitary fighters. The Colombian government reports that since 2002, kidnappings, terrorist attacks, and murders are all down substantially, as is violence against union members.