

more than that. Not only does it not spend more, it doesn't authorize more. I think that is very important for people to understand. There is some confusion from some things I have read in different publications that make it appear that we have increased the authorization. Some things have been moved around, but the bottom line is it has remained unchanged.

The other thing that is important to repeat is that as big as this bill was, the 2005 bill we are scheduled to get into again next year, in 2009, it still doesn't take care of the problem. We have a problem in this country with the \$286 billion figure; it doesn't even maintain what we have today. That is critical. I am hoping the committee that was established for the purpose of exploring new ways of funding transportation will come up with something a little more creative than they have so far because we are not going to be able to do it just by redoing and expanding what Eisenhower started many years ago. So we need to have this bill in order to go ahead and finish the projects that we have authorized and that are paid for at this time, and we won't do it unless we can pass this bill.

So I hope anyone—I would agree with Senator BOXER—anyone with amendments, let's bring them down and talk about them, and I am available to talk, and I am doing that as we speak. I have spoken with a couple of Members who have talked about an amendment. So if you have any amendments, bring them down so Senator BOXER and I can visit with you about the amendments.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AARP

Mr. REID. Madam President, I rise today to call the attention of the Senate to the 50th Anniversary of a remarkable organization that boasts 35 million members, for whom it provides services ranging from discounted prescription drugs, to travel services, to financial services. Most of us on Capitol Hill are far more familiar with this organization as the tireless advocate for the interests of Americans over the age of 50. The organization, of course, is AARP.

In its half-century of service, the organization that we know today as AARP has been transformed from its modest beginnings in 1958 when Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired high school principal, transformed the National Retired Teachers' Organization into the American Association for Retired Persons. The organization was

known under this name until 1999 when it became just AARP to reflect the fact that many of its members are still active in the labor force.

Characteristic of the work of AARP over the past 50 years has been its efforts to influence national policy on behalf of the well being of Americans over the age of 50 and to defend the programs that protect them, especially Social Security and Medicare. More recently, AARP has spearheaded the effort to get bipartisan action in Congress to provide all Americans with health care and long-term financial security with its Divided We Fail campaign. I commend AARP for its outstanding leadership on these issues, which are so critical to millions of Americans.

When President Bush in 2005, fresh from his election victory, made the privatization of Social Security his top domestic priority, he met his match in AARP, which mobilized its members to oppose this very risky plan. Congressional Democrats worked very closely with AARP in that effort, and in the end we were successful, at least temporarily. Unfortunately, given the continuing support for privatization among many in Washington, that battle will have to continue in the years ahead, and I look forward to working closely with AARP to continue to make the case against privatization, and to make sure that America keeps its promise to our seniors.

So I offer a cordial birthday greeting to an organization that is 50 years old and stronger than ever. AARP has kept pace with the needs of mature Americans and, more importantly, it has kept faith with them. In the process, it has made this country a better place for all Americans.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to acknowledge the passage of S. 793, the reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury, TBI, Program. Both the Senate and House of Representatives have passed this bill and it will now be sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.

I thank my colleague and coauthor of the Senate bill, Senator KENNEDY, and his staff for their hard work over the past few years. I also extend my gratitude to Senator ENZI and his staff for their diligent efforts in helping to reauthorize this important program.

I also must thank the leaders of this effort in the House, Representatives BILL PASCRELL, Jr., FRANK PALLONE, Jr., and their staffs who have been so dedicated to helping individuals with TBI.

Also, this bill would not have been possible without the cooperation and input from involved organizations, such as the Brain Injury Association of America, BIAA; the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators, NASHIA; the National Brain In-

jury Research, Treatment and Training Foundation, NBIRTT; and the National Disability Rights Network, NDRN; and I thank them all for their contributions.

It means a lot to the 5.3 million Americans living with TBI, and their families, to reauthorize the only Federal program that helps them. The Federal TBI Program comprises prevention and surveillance activities at the Center for Disease Control, CDC, research at the National Institutes of Health, NIH, and grants to States from the Health Resources and Services Administrations, HRSA. This reauthorization bill expands and improves those activities, and includes provisions to look at the reintegration of war vets returning to their communities.

Each year, 1.4 million people sustain a TBI and face long-term or lifelong need for help to perform activities of daily living as a result. Direct medical costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity of TBI totaled an estimated \$60 billion in the United States in 2000. We can help truncate those costs and ensure that people are connected to the services they need by continuing this important program.

It has been a labor of love to draft and enact legislation to reauthorize this important program. On behalf of individuals living with TBI, and their families, I thank my colleagues in Congress for passing this legislation and reaffirming our commitment to helping those with who suffer from traumatic brain injuries.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, yesterday marked the official beginning of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Since 1981, communities in Vermont and across the Nation have observed this week with candlelight vigils and public rallies to renew our commitment to crime victims and their families. It is vitally important that we recognize the needs of crime victims and their family members, and work together to promote victims' rights and services.

We have been able to make some progress during the past 27 years to provide victims with greater rights and assistance. In particular, I was honored to support the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, VOCA, Public Law 98-473, which established the Crime Victims Fund. The Crime Victims Fund allows the Federal Government to provide grants to State crime victim compensation programs, direct victim assistance services, and services to victims of Federal crimes. Nearly 90 percent of the Crime Victims Fund is used to award victim assistance formula grants and provide State crime victim compensation. These VOCA-funded victim assistance programs serve nearly 4 million crime victims each year, including victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse,

and drunk driving, as well as survivors of homicide victims. Our VOCA-funded compensation programs have helped hundreds of thousands of victims of violent crime.

The Crime Victims Fund is the Nation's premier vehicle for supporting victims' services. It is important to understand that the Crime Victims Fund does not receive a dime from tax revenue or appropriated funding. Instead, it is made up of criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments.

In 1995, after the Oklahoma City bombing, I proposed and Congress passed the Victims of Terrorism Act of 1995. Among other important matters, this legislation authorized the Office for Victims of Crime at the Department of Justice to set aside an emergency reserve as part of the Crime Victims Fund to serve as a "rainy day" resource to supplement compensation and assistance grants to States to provide emergency relief in the wake of an act of terrorism or mass violence that might otherwise overwhelm the resources of a State's crime victims compensation program and crime victims assistance services.

Over the last several years we have made sure that the Crime Victims Fund would remain dedicated to crime victims. We made sure that it would serve as a "rainy day" fund and reserve to help meet crime victims' needs. The "rainy day" fund has been used to make up the difference between annual deposits and distributions three times during the past 7 years. It provides security and continuity to crime victims programs and to our State partners.

Since fiscal year 2000, Congress has set a cap on annual obligations from the Crime Victims Fund. I have worked to ensure that the cap has never resulted in resources being lost to the Crime Victims Fund. I believe we need to increase the cap. With the failure of the Bush administration crime prevention policies, crime began to rise under Attorney General Gonzales. Crime victims, the States and service providers need more assistance.

Instead of taking that salutary action, the Bush administration is proposing to raid the Crime Victims Fund and zero it out. The future of the Crime Victims Fund is in danger because the Bush administration has proposed rescinding all amounts remaining in the Crime Victims Fund at the end of fiscal year 2009—just cleaning it out and leaving the cupboard bare. That would leave the Crime Victims Fund with a zero balance going into fiscal year 2010 and create a disastrous situation for providers of victims' services. That is wrong.

Over the last few years, we have successfully blocked the Bush administration's past attempts to raid the Crime Victims Fund. This is not a cache of money from which this administration should try to reduce the budget deficits it has created. It has turned a \$5 trillion budget surplus into a \$9.4 trillion

debt. Its annual deficits run into the hundreds of millions. It is wrong to try to pay for its failed fiscal policies by emptying out the Crime Victims Fund. These resources are set aside to assist victims of crime.

In order to preserve the Crime Victims Fund once again, Senator CRAPO and I, as well as 25 other Senators, sent a letter on April 4, 2008, to the Senate Appropriations Committee asking that the committee to oppose the administration's proposal to empty the Crime Victims Fund. We asked the Committee, instead, to permit unobligated funds to remain in the Crime Victims Fund, in accordance with current law, to be used for needed programs and services that are so important to victims of crime in the years ahead.

We need to renew our national commitment to crime victims. The Senate can help by recognizing the importance of the Crime Victims' Fund and supporting its essential role in helping crime victims and their families meet critical expenses, recover from the horrific crimes they endured, and move forward with their lives. I urge Senators on both sides of the aisle to honor our longstanding commitment to crime victims by working together to recognize and support victims of crime, and to preserve the Crime Victims Fund.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I wish 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.

Early in the morning of September 9, 2007, police in Antioch, CA, responded to a call regarding a fight that had broken out at a party. According to witnesses, Phillip Hale, 18, and a 17-year-old accomplice were mocking and attempting to provoke a group of deaf partygoers by mimicking their hand movements. The two teens were asked to leave, but came back sometime later with a stick, a hoe, and a brick. Witnesses say a fight ensued upon their return. When police arrived on the scene, they found a substantial amount of blood. One deaf victim suffered a minor head injury, and Hale suffered a head injury as well, for which he was treated at John Muir Medical Center. According to jail records, Hale was booked at Contra County jail on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon, conspiracy, and committing a hate crime.

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.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN EDMUND LITTLE

• Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, it is with great pleasure that today I honor the life of LTC John Edmund Little, a veteran of World War II and a Pearl Harbor survivor. He passed away October 18, 2007, at the age of 92 after serving his country in the U.S. Navy from 1933 to 1937 and in the U.S. Air Force for 19 years from 1940 to 1959.

In 1937, Lieutenant Colonel Little was serving in the U.S. Navy on the USS *Colorado*, which was the first ship to search for Amelia Earhart around Howland Island in the South Pacific.

As a member of the U.S. Air Force, he was serving in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when the island was attacked. Lieutenant Colonel Little went on to become a distinguished fighter pilot in the Southwest Pacific, Solomon Islands from 1942 to 1943. In 1943, he became squadron commander of the 44th Fighter Squadron which became the No. 1 squadron in the South Pacific, and was involved in the fatal strike against Admiral Yamamoto. Nine of the original pilots in his squadron were aces.

During his military career, Lieutenant Colonel Little received numerous awards for his hard work and dedication to the United States. These awards include four Air Medals, American Campaigns Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Armed Forces Reserve Medal. My home State of Arkansas is fortunate to have men and women such as Lieutenant Colonel Little who devote their lives to protecting the citizens of this great Nation.

Madam President, I ask my colleagues to join me today in commemorating LTC John Edmund Little on his service to the United States of America. •

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 2:18 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 845. An act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand and intensify programs with respect to research and related activities concerning elder falls.