

and selflessness of the men and women serving so bravely in America's military and, in particular, to acknowledge those from my home State of Nebraska. Last week, the testimony of GEN David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker before the Senate on the situation in Iraq reminded everyone of the personal sacrifices of the men and women and their families who are serving their country in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The United States is engaged in a protracted war for the first time since the end of the military draft 35 years ago. The strains of this prolonged engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan are underscored by the burdens placed on our service members and their families. The voluntary nature of our military accentuates these burdens, being borne by a relative few. This present situation is unique compared to America's past military engagements. World Wars I and II and the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam relied on conscription; consequently, the effects of these wars were felt by a broad number of ordinary Americans. Today, the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed our soldiers and military families in an extraordinary situation.

I have visited Iraq four times and Afghanistan twice since the commencement of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and have met with countless soldiers and their families. Each of these visits and meetings has further elevated my personal gratitude and appreciation of these men and women, and consequently, these soldiers and their families are constantly at the forefront of my thoughts. Last week, a news story described the battle of Sadr City, a district in Baghdad, Iraq, and featured a young man whom I had watched grow up in Nebraska. This news story evoked those same feelings of deep gratitude and immense pride.

The soldier featured in the story was Army CPT Logan Veath, of Chadron, NE. I had last seen Captain Veath 5 months ago at a reunion of the Big Red Battalion, the University of Nebraska's Reserve Officers' Training Corps, ROTC, unit, of which he was a member while attending our shared alma mater. I had first met Captain Veath when he was 16 years old, and we reminisced at that reunion of our past experiences together. Captain Veath was dressed in cowboy attire—because that is exactly what he is in Nebraska. In fact, I almost didn't recognize him in the news story from Iraq, as he had a Kevlar helmet on his head instead of his usual cowboy hat.

Captain Veath's entire family was also at the reunion, and they provided a brief glimpse into how a family copes with a loved one who is called upon to serve tours of duty lasting from 12 to 15 months. Captain Veath is unique in that this is his sixth tour of duty serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. Less than 1 percent of Army service members have

been deployed six times; this speaks to Captain Veath's remarkable dedication and selflessness.

That day was a vivid reminder of our American soldiers, who must leave their loved ones in order to serve in battles nearly 7,000 miles away from their homes. Today, I offer my most sincere appreciation and gratitude to soldiers such as Army CPT Logan Veath. We must never forget these brave men and women, who have valiantly and selflessly served their country, together with their families, who provide them with immeasurable support. Their honor in service must remain a source of inspiration for us all.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### HONORING JENNIFER JOY WILSON

• Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Jennifer Joy Wilson. For the past decade, Ms. Wilson has served first as the head of the National Stone Association, and then after the merger of two similar groups, as the president and CEO of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, NSSGA. Based in Alexandria, VA, NSSGA is the world's largest mining association by product volume. Its member companies represent more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the United States and approximately 118,000 working men and women in the aggregates industry. During 2006, a total of about 2.95 billion metric tons of crushed stone, sand and gravel, valued at \$21 billion, were produced and sold in the United States.

This year Ms. Wilson has been given the distinguished honor of being selected as AggMan of the Year by Aggregates Manager magazine, one of the construction aggregates industry's leading trade publications.

During her tenure, the NSSGA led an effort to improve employee safety in the aggregate industry by developing new safety procedures, called Part 46, for the U.S. Mine Safety & Health Administration, MSHA. The joint industry-labor effort produced a proposal "that would apply better to our industry and provide managers and workers with effective means to prevent accidents and fatalities." By all accounts, Part 46 has shown remarkable success in reducing employee injuries.

On February 11, 2003, an alliance between NSSGA and MSHA was announced. Signed at the NSSGA's Centennial Convention in Orlando, FL, the agreement calls for the two bodies to work closely together on the promotion of safe working conditions, the development of effective miner training programs, and the expansion of the mine safety and health outreach and communication. "For the first time ever, MSHA and an industry association have jointly agreed to adopt safety and health performance goals with objective measures," then MSHA Ad-

ministrator Dave Lauriski said during that meeting. "This alone is unprecedented . . . NSSGA is again showing its leadership."

On the environmental front, Ms. Wilson led the industry in investing in a study "righting an assumption we just didn't believe was right." Through the efforts of the association and its members, it was determined that the aggregates industry is not a major emitter of PM-10—a particular type of air pollutant. The final regulations reflected the investment by the industry in recognizing that aggregate operations are not a major source of coarse particulate matter.

Considering almost half of all crushed stone, sand and gravel produced in the United States is used for building the Nation's transportation infrastructure, Ms. Wilson has led her members in establishing a strong grassroots presence connecting the industry's workforce with their elected officials while increasing their activity on Capitol Hill. Leveraging the association's resources, Ms. Wilson has also worked closely with industry coalitions to advocate for sound and sensible transportation policies.

Ms. Wilson has also worked to raise awareness of the public, legislators, and of regulators at all levels to the immeasurably important role aggregates play in maintaining America's high quality of life. She calls this effort "romancing the stone" which includes her leadership in establishing The Rocks gallery at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and creating a permanent endowment to support the gallery, all totaling more than \$3.1 million.

Many people have been able to take credit for industry accomplishments, but selection as AggMan of the Year denotes something not everyone can lay claim to—respect of one's peers. For this reason I stand here today to take a moment and congratulate a woman who has done so much for America and the good people in the aggregates industry all the while earning their respect. •

##### RECOGNIZING NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish today to recognize the North Seattle Community College, in my home State of Washington, as a local leader in sustainability practices. The work of North Seattle Community College, and especially of the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee, has made significant contributions to raising awareness of sustainability issues in everyday life on the campus.

Created in 2005, the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee holds regular meetings to coordinate sustainability practices with faculty, staff, administrators, students, and interested local residents.

This committee has helped to create and implement an impressive list of community-wide activities including: sustainability curriculum, courses, and service learning opportunities; a Web site with useful resources; and an annual Earth Day celebration.

The North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee also helped incorporate new resource management practices into campus operations and expanded the campus trail system. By providing these services, the North Seattle Community College Sustainability Committee has done a wonderful job of engaging students, teachers, and local citizens.

I believe that in order to truly embrace the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow, the youth of our Nation must have access to programs that foster stewardship and long-term commitment to community awareness. Washington State is fortunate to have schools like North Seattle Community College, which is a natural arena for the kind of innovation our Nation needs in order to embrace new environmentally friendly practices. Green programs and activities are critical to the development of environmentally aware citizens. I was proud to introduce the Higher Education Sustainability Act to help provide resources for college and universities to implement sustainability programs, and my hope is that schools like North Seattle Community College will continue to serve as great role models for other colleges around the Nation as they work on sustainability issues.

It is inspiring to see that the issue of sustainability is bringing people together, and I am proud North Seattle Community College is empowering the entire campus to work on positive solutions. I am sure North Seattle Community College will continue to be successful in inspiring change and providing continued leadership on this important issue.●

● Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, with Earth Day just a week away, I wish to recognize the steps colleges and universities in my State are taking to increase public awareness about the effect our daily actions have on the environment. Specifically, I would like to applaud the commitment North Seattle Community College has made to incorporate sustainable practices into everyday life at the college and local level.

Sustainability, the simple idea that we can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is a concept that is relevant to our lives now more than ever. Today, our reliance on fossil fuels is not only exacerbating economic woes, it is driving too many of our foreign policy decisions and fueling the detrimental forces of climate change. It is time we shift our focus to sustainable practices that encourage a cleaner environment, healthier communities, a stronger economy, and most importantly, national security.

My home State of Washington has always been a leader when it comes to environmental sustainability. For 75 years we have been on the cutting edge of utilizing natural resources to create sustainable, clean emissions power. I think that Washingtonians, living next door to some of the most pristine river valleys and snowcapped peaks in the world, realize how unfair it would be if our great-grandchildren couldn't do the same.

Furthering our State's environmentally conscious tradition, in the spring of 2005, North Seattle Community College president Dr. Ron LaFayette put NSCC on track to be a leader in the sustainability movement by creating a standing advisory Sustainable Committee to address issues of sustainability at the school.

The committee, made up of faculty, staff, administrators, students, and interested citizenry, began meeting regularly in 2006. Since then, it has spearheaded NSCC's efforts to become a local and national model for sustainability practices.

The Sustainability Committee created and has begun to implement goals that include creating and developing a fact sheet, Web site, and other information-sharing methodology; creating and coordinating curriculum around sustainability issues. This includes developing new stand-alone courses, integrated studies programs, service learning and distance learning opportunities; furthering the development of a campus trail system, including a walking trail and an interpretive nature trail; incorporating sustainable practices into campus operations—including food service, waste management, and resource usage; and sponsoring the annual Earth Week celebration. In 2007, this festival included guest speakers and over 35 vendors including educational institutions, environmental nonprofits, and neighborhood businesses.

I am personally encouraged by the attention North Seattle Community College and other Washington State schools have given to advancing sustainable practices in our schools and communities. I hope more institutions of higher education will follow suit in years to come.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:53 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3548. An act to enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing plain language as the standard style for Government documents issued to the public, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4881. An act to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contractor grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BIDEN, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2731. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to provide assistance to foreign countries to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 110-325).

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 2855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to adjust the dollar amounts used to calculate the credit for the elderly and the permanently disabled for inflation since 1985; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide taxpayers a flat tax alternative to the current income tax system; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SALAZAR (for himself and Mr. ALLARD):

S. 2857. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the distribution of a share of certain mineral revenues, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. SMITH, and Mr. INOUE):