

We recently had a hearing, in fact yesterday, before the Senate Appropriations Committee, where Jim Nussle, who is chairman of the Office of Management and Budget, spoke. Jim comes from the State of Iowa. He is a former Congressman, former chairman of the House Budget Committee.

I asked him about this. I asked him if the administration would consider, as part of their supplemental appropriations bill, including more money for this global food crisis. I am afraid Mr. Nussle was adamant in saying they would not. They would not consider adding any money to the \$108 billion for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. He said that is all the President has asked for.

I hope Mr. Nussle will reconsider. I certainly hope the President will reconsider. What is at issue is not a political fight. What is at issue is a fight for food so some of the poorest people on Earth can survive. The United States will have a chance to demonstrate to the world our values and what we stand for. I hope we can do that by adding to this supplemental funding bill enough money to provide assistance to people around the world who face deprivation and starvation because of the current global food crisis.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL THOMAS P. ECHOLS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today because a brave man from Kentucky has fallen in the far-away country of Iraq. LCpl Thomas P. Echols was tragically killed on December 4, 2006, during combat operations in the city of Ramadi. The Shepherdsville, KY, native was 20 years old.

Lance Corporal Echols was serving his second deployment in Iraq. For his valor as a U.S. Marine, he received several medals, awards, and decorations, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and the Purple Heart.

Raised in Shepherdsville, in Bullitt County, Tom was actually born in Mount Clemens, MI, and as a result Tom brought with him to Kentucky a fast and true love for his University of Michigan Wolverines. His grandfather, Don Wight, still recalls how his grandson once saved up money for weeks to buy tickets to a University of Michigan football game.

"I'm an MSU grad, he's a dyed-in-the-wool University of Michigan fan. Anything he could find that was U of M memorabilia, he had it," says Don. "He

was just a good, fun-loving young man." Despite the longstanding rivalry between the University of Michigan and Michigan State, Tom and his grandfather went to that Wolverines football game together.

While Tom's eyes looked north to his beloved Wolverines, his feet were firmly planted in Kentucky. He attended Cedar Grove Elementary School, Bernheim Middle School, and Bullitt Central High School, all in Shepherdsville. He graduated from Riverview High School in Shepherdsville in 2004.

Growing up, Tom belonged to his school's football and track teams. He played video games and paintball. And in high school he participated in Junior ROTC and the drill team, perhaps preparing himself for the military life he hoped would lie ahead.

Tom chose to pursue service in uniform by the time high school graduation rolled around. His father, Kurt Echols, remembers his son thinking of a career in the Armed Forces as early as middle school. Perhaps Tom drew inspiration from his father, a veteran himself.

Tom "was a good kid, loved sports, a big Michigan fan," Kurt says of his son, and remembers him as someone who always enjoyed a good joke.

In the fall of 2004, Tom enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was a member of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division from Camp Lejeune, NC, and during his deployment to Iraq, his regiment fell under the command of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, Forward.

Tom's longtime friend Tim Zamboroski was sorry to see the childhood buddy he had grown up with whisked away to the other side of the world. As kids, Tom and Tim used to play baseball together in the backyard. As men, they would trade e-mails back and forth from America to Iraq.

"I think he was pretty happy with serving the country," Tim says. "I'm going to miss him." When he heard Tom had been killed, Tim says he felt as if he had lost a brother.

Lance Corporal Echols drove humvees during his first tour in Iraq, and by his second tour had become an infantryman.

While serving in the Marine Corps, he also became a husband, after asking Allyson Echols, whom he met in high school, to marry him.

Tom and Allyson married during the week of Thanksgiving in 2005. Allyson now raises the couple's young daughter, Julia, who sadly never got to meet her father.

Tom was buried at the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, KY, with full military honors. A large crowd of people came to pay their final respects. Sheriffs from both Bullitt County and neighboring Jefferson County were there, and Tom's father Kurt remembers with pride that members of a local fire department erected a large American flag in honor of his son.

Our prayers are with the family of Lance Corporal Echols today as God comforts them for their tragic loss. We are thinking of his wife Allyson; his daughter Julia; his parents Kurt and Rose; his sister Rebecca; his brother Alexander; his grandparents Jerry and Sharon Echols and Donald and Mary Wight; and many other beloved family members and friends.

This U.S. Senate expresses its deepest gratitude for LCpl Thomas P. Echols's life of service. And we express our deepest gratitude for the Echols family, for nurturing this man, patriot, and marine who answered the call in his country's time of need.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Week of the Young Child, taking place this week, April 13 through 19.

Sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Week of the Young Child is held annually to honor young children and those who make a difference in their lives. This year's theme is "Bring Communities Together for Children—Children Bring Communities Together". This week presents an opportunity for us all to focus on the needs of the 20 million young children around the country. It shines a light on the importance of issues like affordable childcare for working families, access to quality early childhood educational programs, and the availability of adequate health care.

As a father and a grandfather, I am troubled by the fact that so many young children in this country live with the effects of poverty and inadequate health and child care every day. It is estimated that 24 percent of American children under the age of 6 live in poverty and 24 percent of those children are without health insurance. In addition, although nearly 50 percent of working families rely on outside childcare, fees for these programs are skyrocketing, leaving them out of reach for too many. The Week of the Young Child highlights the role of the Federal, State, and local governments, as well as private organizations and the general public, in alleviating these problems and working toward a stronger, healthier community.

The Week of the Young Child also gives us an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the programs and organizations that provide vital services to young children and their families. For example, the Head Start Program provides comprehensive early education and health services to almost 1 million low-income preschool children to help them prepare for and succeed in school.

Additionally, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, CCDBG, provides funding to States for childcare services for low-income families and activities intended to improve the overall quality and supply of childcare. For families transitioning to financial

independence, CCDBG-funded services play an especially significant role.

Investing in America's young children is one of the best steps we can take to ensure the future success of our Nation. I am pleased to recognize the Week of the Young Child, and I extend my thanks to those in Nevada—and around the country—who provide for our young children on a daily basis.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today I strongly support Senator SALAZAR's resolution designating this week, the third week in April, as the "Week of the Young Child." I hope the resolution represents a new commitment by all of us in Congress to strengthen the services young children need to become full and productive members of our society in the years ahead.

Last year's reauthorization of the Head Start Act was a significant step in the right direction to assure access to quality early childhood education. The act expanded coverage to families just above the poverty line and provided additional flexibility to assist more poor families as they make the transition to work and struggle to keep up with the rising cost of living in today's new economy. We also renewed our commitment to underserved populations, such as Native Americans and migrant and seasonal farm worker families, and worked to ensure that every teacher in every Head Start classroom is highly qualified.

In addition, the reauthorization established an Early Childhood Education Advisory Council to assess the needs children in of early childhood programs and develop a comprehensive plan for improving the quality of services provided. That effort will improve professional development, upgrade standards, enhance connections among programs, and improve data collection. States ready to take on the challenge of implementing these needed improvements qualify for inventive grants to get that work underway. Together these reforms strengthen our commitment to provide both quality childcare, and quality early learning opportunities for the Nation's youth. But there is still much more to be done.

The research is clear—high quality early education makes a profound difference in the lives of children, especially at-risk children. In fact, many experts believe that 85 percent of a child's intellect is established before a child reaches the age of five. Unless we begin to educate at-risk children before they reach kindergarten, we may lose them forever. Students who start school behind tend to stay behind, and early childhood education makes all the difference. Those who have access to high quality early childhood education are 30 percent more likely to graduate from high school, twice as likely to go on to college, and are 40 percent less likely to need expensive special education programs or be held back a grade.

But the positive benefits extend beyond the classroom. Early childhood

education helps to break the devastating cycle of crime and poverty. Nobel Laureate James Heckman's study of at-risk boys who receive quality early education shows that less than 10 percent of the boys who participated would be convicted of a crime and less than 2 percent would end up on welfare—rates significantly lower than those who did not receive such education.

Quality early education programs are supportive of young children in ways that enable them to become productive members of society. By cultivating educated, law abiding members of society we help to guarantee our national competitiveness, the stability of our economy and the fabric of our communities for the years ahead. Early childhood education creates better students, better workers and better citizens.

We must invest in such education for sake of our students and our national well being. We know the best way to ensure that our students receive quality early education is by giving them a highly qualified teacher. Yet, early childhood educators continue to be overworked and undervalued in our society. Prekindergarten teachers get paid on average less than half what an elementary school teacher gets paid. The Bureau of Labor statistics estimates that the average salary of a preschool teacher is \$21,730—closer to the salaries of school bus drivers, at \$22,890, than any other group of educators, all with median salaries over \$44,000.

Inadequate wages make it nearly impossible to recruit and retain qualified early childhood educators. The number of childcare providers with bachelor's degrees declines year after year, and neither their wages nor the high rates of turnover are acceptable. We must make it a national priority to guarantee that early childhood educators are paid and supported in a manner that reflects their valuable contributions to our Nation's future.

We have come a long way in assuring that our Nation's young children have access to the supports and services they need, but our mission is far from complete. This is no time for complaining. We must continue to expand our support for our nation's youngest children, for they truly are America's future. Let's use this "Week of the Young Child" to emphasize that vital point for communities across our great country.

THE 265TH ANNIVERSARY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in today's RECORD a detailed speech. I was privileged to go to the White House on Monday, when the President celebrated, with many others, the 265th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson. Those remarks are so prized, particularly in my State, but all across America, that I wish to put the content of those speeches in today's RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY,

April 14, 2008.

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY
IN HONOR OF THOMAS JEFFERSON'S 265TH
BIRTHDAY

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are so honored you are here. I welcome members of my Cabinet, members of the United States Senate, folks who work in the White House, the Governor of Virginia and Anne Holton. Thank you all for coming. We're really happy you're here.

We're here tonight to commemorate the 265th birthday of Thomas Jefferson, here in a room where he once walked and in a home where he once lived. In this house, President Jefferson spread the word that liberty was the right of every individual. In this house, Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark off on the mission that helped make America a continental nation. And in this house, Jefferson was known to receive guests in his bathrobe and slippers. (Laughter.) Laura said no. (Laughter.) I don't have a bathrobe. (Laughter.)

With a single sentence, Thomas Jefferson changed the history of the world. After countless centuries when the powerful and the privileged governed as they pleased, Jefferson proclaimed as a self-evident truth that liberty was a right given to all people by an Almighty.

Here in America, that truth was not fully realized in Jefferson's own lifetime. As he observed the condition of slaves in America, Jefferson said, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just" and "that his justice cannot sleep forever." Less than 40 years after his death, justice was awakened in America and a new era of freedom dawned.

Today, on the banks of the Tidal Basin, a statue of Thomas Jefferson stands in a rotunda that is a memorial to both the man and the ideas that built this nation. There, on any day of the week, you will find men and women of all creeds, colors, races and religions. You will find scholars, schoolchildren and visitors from every part of our country. And you will find each of them looking upward in quiet reflection on the liturgy of freedom—the words of Thomas Jefferson inscribed on the memorial's walls.

The power of Jefferson's words do not stop at water's edge. They beckon the friends of liberty on even the most distant shores. They're a source of inspiration for people in young democracies like Afghanistan and Lebanon and Iraq. And they are a source of hope for people in nations like Belarus and Burma, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Syria, North Korea and Zimbabwe, where the struggle for freedom continues.

Thomas Jefferson left us on July 4, 1826—fifty years to the day after our Declaration of Independence was adopted. In one of the great harmonies of history, his friend and rival John Adams died on the very same day. Adams' last words were, "Thomas Jefferson survives." And he still does today. And he will live on forever, because the desire to live in freedom is the eternal hope of mankind.

And now it's my pleasure to welcome Wilfred McClay to the stage. (Applause.)

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MRS. BUSH: Thank you very much, Mr. McClay and Mr. Wilson. Thank you so—for your reflections on Thomas Jefferson's life and his contributions to our nation, and thanks to each of you for joining us today so we can learn more about the legacy of one of America's most influential founding fathers.