

had talked to his mother shortly before killing himself. Among his final words: "I've been dead ever since I left Iraq."

As a result of this, and in paying tribute to him, we have created a suicide hotline for veterans. That is what this is all about. We have saved 726 lives. Veterans need help. This is a war like we have never had before. We have never fought a war in big cities, street to street, house to house.

Last night, I had a marine in my office, at about quarter to 7 last night. He came with his wife-to-be, his mother, and his father. They are from Illinois. He is a big, strong man. One of his ears was cauliflowered, as he had been a college wrestler. He was missing his right leg above the knee. He is going to be in and out of the hospital, and he will be able to go home soon. His problem is not with the leg he lost, it is with the leg he still has. He lifted up his pant leg and showed me the scars. He had major surgery and has scars. He is tough and said, "I am going to be just fine."

We are trying to help people such as him. They are all over America, coming home from Iraq and are hurt and need help. We cannot even debate this legislation because Republicans are stalling it. We are having a vote at noon on Tuesday. I hope we will be able to get 60 votes and proceed. You would think there would be nine Republicans who are caring enough to allow us to go forward on this most important issue.

We also extend eligibility for specially adapted housing benefits to individuals with severe burns. This war, which is within cities—I got carried away describing this man's injuries.

I said, "Tell me what happened."

He said, "We came out of the house, climbed in the vehicle, and it blew up."

I said, "How long were you in the truck?"

He said, "Maybe 20 seconds."

The road had been paved—a newly paved road. They put a bomb on it. When he drove over it, the compression caused it to blow up. He had burns—you could see them—on his face. The scars weren't bad, but there were burns.

A lot of the people, because of these explosive devices, have terrible burns. This legislation we want to try to pass extends eligibility for these people who were burned badly to have special housing benefits.

The legislation would extend and increase benefits for individuals trying to change what they do, with apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs.

Also, the legislation would restore veteran status to Filipino veterans who served under U.S. command in World War II. One only need watch Tom Hanks's World War II series that appeared on television. It talked about the valor and the absolute necessity for the Filipino soldiers who were there fighting under our command. We have been trying for decades to extend benefits to them. They are getting very old

with each day that goes by, and more of them are dying. Their average age is well over 80. We want to allow them certain benefits. They fought alongside U.S. troops during World War II. It is the moral obligation of this Nation to provide for those Filipino veterans who fought under the U.S. flag during World War II.

After 8 months of obstruction by the Republicans, it is time to allow this bill to be debated. If there are people who don't like provisions in this bill, they can offer an amendment to try to take them out. Why hold up benefits for veterans?

This legislation provides much needed benefits and includes 8 titles, with 38 benefits. If there were ever a piece of legislation that should not be stalled, obstructed, and delayed, it is this one. We have waited 8 months to bring this up. With the Republicans, it is always tomorrow, we almost have it worked out, or how about tomorrow or next week or next month? We cannot wait any longer. People have to step up to the bar here, Mr. President, on Tuesday at noon and vote to find out if we can legislate for the veterans coming back from Iraq and those veterans who have, prior to Iraq, dedicated their lives to the service of their country, our country.

COMMEMORATING EARTH DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 38 years ago, Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin founded Earth Day to celebrate the environment and to call attention to the major environmental issues of the time. Once again we celebrate the progress we have made to protect our environment, and are again called upon to address new challenges facing our planet.

Since Earth Day's conception in 1970 our Nation has worked to reduce pollution and clean up lakes, streams, and the air we breathe. These environmental accomplishments have made us healthier, our economy prosper, and have helped to make America even more beautiful.

Although we have made great strides to improve and protect our environment, it is clear that we are facing one of the gravest environmental challenges of our time. Global warming from man-made greenhouse gas emissions may be the most complicated crisis our world has ever faced. We must address it quickly and boldly in the United States and assert global leadership on this most important issue.

Rising temperatures threaten to devastate western landscapes, intensify drought, and magnify summer heat waves. Fortunately, if we act swiftly, we still have a narrow window of time and opportunity to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Over the next 15 years, I am confident that we can reduce emissions by at least 25 percent. We will establish a framework for capping greenhouse gas

emissions without imposing economic hardship on Americans. We will also create a business environment that provides ample incentives to phase out rapidly our current outdated 19th century energy production and decision-making methods.

Global warming is an enormous opportunity wrapped in a complex challenge. On this Earth Day, I want Nevadans and all Americans to embrace and prepare for the challenge, and recognize the tremendous opportunity we have to improve our energy security, create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and develop the new, clean, efficiency and renewable energy economy of the future. With the right investments and political will, we can soon power all our cars, homes and industry with power from the Sun, the wind, and the Earth.

In a 100-mile-square area of Nevada and the Southwest's desert, we have enough solar energy resources to supply the entire United States with electricity. This might seem unreal today because our thinking is shaped most by those who profit from selling us fossil fuels. But, solar technologies at the utility-scale and in distributed applications are quickly becoming economical and have far fewer of the hidden costs of coal, nuclear and other unsustainable resources.

In addition, we have vast wind and geothermal resources that America has only begun to tap. By expanding and improving transmission access to rural and undeveloped areas where solar, wind and geothermal are often most plentiful, our renewable energy resources can work in affordable harmony, improving our energy security and reliability, using cost-free fuel for ever.

In a speech I gave earlier this year, I established five policy goals to promote renewable energy. These principles will help launch Nevada and the nation in a new direction that chooses ingenuity over stagnation, progress over pollution. They include: consumer choice—allowing consumers to choose renewable energy to power their homes at reasonable cost; consumer empowerment—allowing homeowners to receive credit for generating their own renewable electricity; making space for renewables—setting aside federal land for renewable energy production; investment—providing incentives to utility companies to choose renewables and efficiency over fossil fuels; and electric cars—building a smart grid that can charge electric automobiles.

Achieving these policy goals could help make our nation more sustainable, both environmentally and economically. They are some of the necessary steps we must take toward a low-carbon economy.

Climate scientists tell us that the countries of the world have approximately 10-15 years to radically transform the way that energy is made and consumed because greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are

verging on dangerous interference with the global climate system. This means making tremendous reductions quickly and ensuring that our energy decisions today do not warp the future for our children and generations to come.

As we celebrate Earth Day this year, I ask that you join me in thinking about the road ahead and how we will overcome this great environmental challenge that we face as Nevadans, Americans, and citizens of the world.

MORNING BUSINESS

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

NATIONAL WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today I recognize the National Week of the Young Child. This week provides all of us here in Washington the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which we can better care for children in our communities and more effectively cooperate with teachers, parents, and other caregivers.

Critical to the success of many disadvantaged Iowa children is the Head Start program. If we really want to get kids ready for school, we must focus on early intervention. This means improving access to education and developmental services to help provide kids with a good start in life. Since 1965, Head Start has served more than 24 million low-income children and their families.

Head Start programs help Iowa families to meet young children's basic educational, health, nutritional and social needs with a goal of having these kids ready for the first day of kindergarten. I was pleased to recently help modernize and update Head Start by passing The Head Start for School Readiness Act, which allows more families access to programs, improves early childhood training for Head Start educators, and updates learning standards to reflect the latest research in child development. I also made sure that early learning programs do not ignore the importance of wellness and healthy behaviors by requiring training to integrate physical activity and good nutrition in the classroom.

I have heard tremendous stories from my State of children whose lives were improved through the social services Head Start provides. These children received eye glasses or necessary dental work thanks to the early intervention of our Head Start programs. Head Start educators and employees often connect parents in need to the outreach services which help give children safe and comfortable homes.

I was particularly touched by the story of Rebecca Navarro. She writes that her youngest son, Anthony, received help learning his letters and colors, and improved his social skills, through their local Head Start agency.

At the same time, a Head Start social worker helped Ms. Navarro go back to school and receive her degree, pay for food and utilities and provide a better quality of life for Anthony and his four siblings. Anthony has now successfully graduated the 6th grade with math skills above his grade level, and plans on going to college and getting his master's degree in engineering and math.

Providing our Nation's youngest learners with the tools they need to succeed benefits not only those children and their families, but our Nation as well. While celebrating the victories of Head Start this week, we should also continue to work hard to ensure every child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.●

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN GOSPEL CHORALE

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a memorable trip recently taken by a group of students from University of Michigan. Each spring, many students head for warmer climates during spring break. However, the University of Michigan's Gospel Chorale, comprised of 40 students, spent this year's spring break accompanying university president Mary Sue Coleman and other faculty and staff to the nation of Ghana.

During this trip, the Michigan Gospel Chorale performed at churches, schools, colleges and public forums, including the National Theatre and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, where they were warmly received. In fact, they performed before an audience of more than 2,500 at Ghana's National Theatre. One of their most moving performances occurred when the chorale sang in the dungeons of the Elmina Castle, where slaves were once held captive before they were transported across the ocean.

The purpose of the University's trip to Ghana was to strengthen existing relationships the University of Michigan has in Africa and to explore opportunities for new research programs and for faculty and student cultural exchanges. Currently, more than 120 University of Michigan faculty members are involved in various projects in Ghana and South Africa, and numerous students are taking courses or are involved in research activities.

As you know, the United States has a long history with Ghana, and that partnership continues to grow. The people of Ghana will remember the efforts of the University of Michigan and the Michigan Gospel Chorale's visit for a long time. For the Michigan Gospel Chorale, the journey provided a significant global learning experience. Many of the students had never traveled by air or had been out of the country. I am sure my colleagues agree that it is important for our young people to have opportunities to explore, and to con-

tribute to, our ever-expanding global community.

I know my colleagues join me in commending the University of Michigan and the Michigan Gospel Chorale for their outstanding efforts in fostering goodwill between the United States and the nation of Ghana.●

HOLD ON NOMINATION OF HARVEY E. JOHNSON

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, more than 40 months ago, prior to his confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff told me in my office that if confirmed he would move expeditiously to implement the National Emergency Technology Guard—NET Guard—program. Unfortunately, Secretary Chertoff has so far failed to honor this pledge.

The idea of NET Guard was born in the aftermath of 9-11, when a number of communications and technology companies told me they wanted to help New York City when it was attacked—and there was no system for using their volunteers. Then-Senator George Allen and I moved on a bipartisan basis to support a program, called NET Guard, that would ensure that volunteers with technology expertise could be fully utilized in future crises. These teams of local volunteers with science and technology expertise would be vital in assisting our communities in responding to attacks on communications networks, or recovering from natural disasters. Congress authorized the establishment of NET Guard 5 years ago, in the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

However, DHS has delayed and delayed and so far failed to implement this critical program.

At times, Secretary Chertoff has appeared willing to move forward on NET Guard, but each time he stops short of action. On August 1, 2007, the Secretary pledged to me in a letter that he would be submitting a request to fund the NET Guard program in the President's fiscal year 2009 budget. I will ask that a copy of Secretary Chertoff's letter be printed in the RECORD. I thought this meant that the Secretary recognized NET Guard's potential and understood Congress's intention in authorizing the program. Unfortunately he failed to fulfill this promise and we again find ourselves at an impasse.

I feel that further delay is unacceptable. I reluctantly feel that I must put a hold on the nomination of Harvey E. Johnson who has been nominated by President Bush to serve as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, until the NET Guard program is up and running.

I place this hold reluctantly, but see no other option in light of the Department's foot dragging. I am hopeful that the Department will soon be able to stand up a NET Guard program, and I will be able to withdraw my hold and Mr. JOHNSON's nomination can move through the Senate. In the meantime, I