

to moving to conference for the simple reason that this issue will be resolved a different way, but, more importantly, pertinent to S. 1315 the mechanism is already in place that takes away the funds that are used to fund this expansion in S. 1315.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am disappointed and somewhat surprised that objection has been made on this motion. I must tell my colleagues that I have deep respect for my friend and colleague and my ranking member. I respectfully say that this objection is one that disappoints me, but it has been made to this motion. The intent of the motion is to create a mechanism by which there might be further action on this very important veterans legislation before the Congress goes into recess.

Last week, when I sought a UC with reference to this legislation, I did so by seeking to utilize an unrelated House bill as a vehicle to create a conference. In objecting to that approach, the Senator from Idaho said my approach was a tactic he hoped we would not use to address this important issue. He objected. While I did not agree that this tactic was inappropriate, given the lack of action in the House on S. 1315 at the time, I recognized the merits of the Senator's position.

Now, however, the motion is to use the same bill, S. 1315, as passed by both Houses. That is, in fact, the normal process, the regular order for resolving differences between the Houses. I addressed the Senator's concerns and am disappointed to see his Republican colleague objecting. I wish to remind my colleagues this bill passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to 1. Surely there must be some willingness to stand by the Senate position, to validate the Senate's action.

As I noted last week, this bill would improve benefits and services for veterans, both young and old. There are many provisions that address a broad range of veterans benefits. This bill deserves to be resolved and brought to a final vote. I realize there is some opposition to the provision which allows this legislation to meet pay-go requirements through the legislative reversal of a case known as Hartness.

According to the one veterans organization that has expressed its opposition, the concern is not over the merits of the court decision. They simply oppose this effort to correct a mistake. The court's decision resulted in veterans receiving an extra pension benefit based solely on their age. This is not what Congress intended. I have not seen any analysis of the legislative history that supports that result.

The purpose of the provision in S. 1315 is simply to restore the law to what it was supposed to be. Those who have characterized it as an attempt to withdraw benefits from deserving veterans and grant them to undeserving

veterans are simply not fairly describing the legislation. The Hartness decision is wrong and should be overturned. How the savings of that action are treated is a fair subject for debate, and I believe we should have that discussion in the context of a conference between the two Veterans' Affairs Committees. I again ask, as I did last week, that the Senator, or Senators, who object to this request to set up a conference with the House advise me of the concerns and see if it might be possible to find a way forward. I am very committed to this legislation and would like to see if we can reach final action before we recess. If we are not able to do so, I intend to renew my efforts in the next Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Let me add for purposes of my colleagues that all the benefits incorporated in S. 1315 that do not have mandatory spending implications have been negotiated between the House and the Senate and are part of another benefits package that I hope will move through the Congress. If there were a conference on S. 1315, the conference would be about only mandatory spending provisions, including mandatory spending for Filipino veterans. The chairman and I have debated this in public, and we are on two different ends. We have done that with civility and I have tried to do it and he has tried to do it with passion and with facts.

At the end of the day, I will lose. There will be a special pension that is created out of the continuing resolution. It will be funded with money that is pulled out of the sky, which we do regularly in Washington.

The House has spoken about the Hartness decision and the fact that they did not want to use that money. I think my chairman will get the benefit he is looking for in the continuing resolution. But for the purposes of those things that affect our veterans that do not require an offset, we did not wait to see the outcome of this bill. We have sat down and negotiated with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Republican and Democrat. We have put those additional benefits for our veterans into a benefits package that I feel certain will pass by unanimous consent.

So there is still a disagreement the chairman and I have relative to this new special pension. But at the end of the day, there will be one, assuming there is a continuing resolution, that is passed. It will not be funded out of the Hartness, which is the preference of the House. As a matter of fact, it will not be funded at all. We will pull it out of where we typically pull money, and that is the pockets of future generations of American people.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:45 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 8:48 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. CANTWELL).

HONORING RALPH ROSE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to take a moment to recognize one of our Nation's heroes from World War II. I am proud to say that he is a resident of my home State of Kentucky. His name is Ralph Rose. Mr. Rose is being honored in a Veterans Day ceremony in Hardinsburg, KY, this November for his heroic action in defense of our Nation and for his continued service to veterans in the local community.

Mr. Rose was born in Mystic, KY, in 1922. He entered the U.S. military at age 20. During his time in the Armed Forces, Mr. Rose served in General Patton's Army and fought the Germans in France. But on a fateful night, Mr. Rose and several of his fellow soldiers were captured by Axis forces. He was held as a prisoner of war for more than 8 months until the Allies occupied Munich.

Mr. Rose suffered unimaginable hardships at the hands of the enemy, but by all accounts, he does not dwell on them. In fact, he has said that if given the choice to serve in the Army again—even knowing what he would have to endure as a prisoner of war—he would have done the same thing.

As a true testament to his dedication to the Armed Forces, Mr. Rose continues to serve his country by helping and inspiring other veterans in the Commonwealth.

There is a special flag that honors our American heroes like Mr. Rose. It is called the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag, and it has a simple statement at the bottom: "You are not forgotten." Just as surely as that flag sits outside my office each day, I can guarantee you that those whose lives have been touched by Mr. Rose will never forget the sacrifices he made to keep our Nation free and prosperous.

HONORING THE 3RD BATTALION, 320TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to take a brief moment to recognize the men and women of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment and its subordinate units. The battalion has been assigned to Fort Campbell since 1986. Since then, it has been deployed in support of various military operations around the world—including its current mission in support of the global war on terror.

In November, the members of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery will return home to Fort Campbell, to their

eager families and to a grateful Nation after 15 long months in Iraq. During their deployment, these brave Americans fought our enemies in one of the most dangerous sectors of southern Baghdad. They also spent months training their Iraqi Army counterparts so that one day Iraq may be able to enjoy the same security we have here at home.

Freedom is something many of us take for granted. Not so for the members of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, who have defended freedom by enduring great hardship. The same is true of their families, who have also sacrificed for freedom with sleepless nights and fear for the safety of their loved ones. As Americans, we are forever indebted to those in the military community who have given so much to protect our liberty and our way of life. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the men and women of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery for their heroic service and in welcoming them back home.

I also ask unanimous consent to have the names of these brave Americans printed in the RECORD.

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

Sgt Shane Michael Adams; 1Lt Nicholas Lawrence Albright; Sfc Bradley William Amstutz; Sfc Michael David Andrews; Sfc Harold Gene Barnes III; Sfc Robert Carlton Beardsley; Ssg Philip John Belmont; Sgt David Frank Benoit, Jr.; Sfc Shaun Edward Benoit; Maj Carl Lawrence Bergmann; Pfc Joshua Keith Brakefield; Sgt Robert James Bronson; Sgt James Deon Brown; Ssg Marco Maurice Brown; Cpl Jeremy Thomas Burch; Sfc Steven Henry Burtis; Cpt Jose F. Cepedaramos; Sfc Donald Ross Chambers, Jr.; Ssg Jervey Ismail Chisholm, Jr.; Sgt Christian Clermont.

Sgt William Russell Cox III; Pfc Alex Bryan Craig; Sgt Carlos Rosheen Davis; Spc Omar Balero de Soto; Sfc Jose Angel DeLeon; Pfc Seth Francis Duke; Spc Christopher James Dunn; Ssg Rafael A. Echevarriacosme; Sfc Jerald Keith Ernest; Sgt Matthew Jude Falanga; Pfc Christian Lee Feist; Sgt Gary Albert Ferrell; Pfc Joshua Ray Flenoid; Spc Jose Francisco Fonseca; Spc Donavon Taylor Fox; Sgt Peterson Marshall Gangwer; Spc Maurice Jerome Gilliard; Sgt Erik Omar Gomez; Pfc Jesus Leopoldo Gonzalezcorella; Sfc Jeffrey Lee Goulet.

Spc Travis Martin Greene; Spc Jarod Wayne Grimes; Msg Richard Eric Harbor; Pv2 Joshua Evan Hardy; Sgt Michael Ray Hawk; Pfc Jeffery Daniel Haynes; Spc Germaine Adam Haywood; Spc Colton Lee Helps; Sgt Donald August Henggeler; Sgt Andrew Joseph Hershey; Sgt Jonathan Paul Hess; Sfc Zackery Deleve Hicks; Sgt Steve Joel Holiskey, Jr.; Cpt Michael J. Horne; Cpt David Arthur Howald; Ssg Daniel Howell Howard; Sgt Brandon Tyrone Howell; Spc Jeremy Isaac; Sfc Michael Dale Jenkins; Sgt John Robert Logan Jones.

Pfc Rajan Karki; Sgt Michael Benjamin Kaufman; Ssg Brent Alan Keeton; Maj Richard Robert Kelling; Pv2 Louis Eugene Kohler; Cpt Jeffrey S. Kudary; Spc James Joseph Larocco; Sgt Jun Wai Lee; Spc Michael David Lee; Sgt Kwisi Wayne Lewis; Spc Isaias Lopez; Cw2 Bennett Fielding Love, Jr.; Sgt Jonathan Machado; Sgt Brandon Lawrence Maybush; Pfc Michael Patrick McNamee; Ssg Adam Terrell Mealor; Spc

Samuel Elijah Miles, Jr.; Ssg Michael Brendan Moriarty; Pfc Clayne Conally Moss; Cpt Brian Everett Murphy.

Cpt Benjamin Eric Neusse; Pfc Michael Edward Oberkrom; Pfc David Eduardo Parra; Pfc Nicholas Andrew Partida; Sgt Jesse Robert Patterson; Sgt Nathaniel Norman Patterson; Ssg Christopher Lee Pelfrey; Spc Reginald Lamarc Pendergrass; Pv2 John Michael Phillips; Sgt Kurt Glenn Pittman; Spc John Albert Pollock, Jr.; Sgt Jonathan Thomas Porter; Cpt Christopher Michae Prevet; Ssg Tony Van Quach; Cpt Rimas A. Radzius; Sfc Scott Anthony Ramsdell; Sfc Franklyn Roy Richards; Pfc Maxwell Adam David Rockwell; Ssg Jorge Luis Rodriguezramirez; Sgt Alexander Dustin Rudasi.

Cpt Brandon Douglas Rumbelow; Ssg Brandon Michael Sanders; Spc Daniel Laron Saunders; Ssg Gregory Nichola Scarborough; Cpt Dwight Robert Smithbarrow; Ssg John Mark Springer; Pfc Alexander Phillip Stewart; Spc Leo Franklin Stewart; Pfc Steven Andrew Stillwell; Sfc Patrick Byron Stivers; Sgt Craig Michael Storkamp; Pfc Zachary Allen Suarez; Spc Chee Fong Tam; Spc Jeffery Lewis Tanner; 1Lt Daniel H. Tenhagen; Sfc Bryan Lee Thomas; Cpt Benjamin Lawrence Torpy; Pfc Matthew Nicholas Tracy; 1Sg Edward John Tushar, Jr.; Ssg David Garth Vankuren.

Sgt Ranfly Vazquez; Pfc Steven Michael Vazquez; Sgt Rogelio Velazquez, Jr.; Msg Steven Robert Veteto; Spc Catarino Alexand Villanueva; Sgt Matthew Alan Wacholtz; Spc Kevin Dwayne Walker; Csm Mike Wayne Watkins; Spc Frank Epine Wilson; Pfc Joseph Lee Wright; Ltc William Hill Zemp; Sgt Enrique Zuniga, Jr.; Spc Nathaniel Jay Badders; Pfc Daniel Brian Bates; Sgt Joseph Dowling Beck; Sgt James Aldo Benozich; Sgt Erwin Eduardo Beroncal; Ssg Nathaniel Jamal Blizzard; Sfc Robert Patrick Brady; Spc Daniel Parker Brooks.

Sgt Rickey Donele Bynum, Jr.; Sgt Marco Antonio Canaza; Sgt Mario Rafa Castillomartinez; Pfc Mark Alan Crisler; Sgt Rodney Lee Crisp; Spc Robert Allen Davis; Cpt Michael Thomas Denison; Sgt Daniel Garcia; Pfc Adrian Mathew Gonzalez; 1Lt Bronson J. Hayes; Spc Ryan Francis Matthew Hill; Pfc Tony Lee Hinkle; Sfc Kenneth Ray Hipes; Spc Matthew Stewart Hirschman; Spc Ronald Joseph Holland; Spc Brentoin Andrew Huhn; Sfc James Edward Jorgensen; Cpt Robert Shane King; Sgt Stephen Jarod Laeger; Spc Timothy Lee Lancello.

Spc Hector Manuel Lugo; Ssg James Eugene Lutz; Sgt Ian Stanley Neil MacNeil; Sgt Tommy Glen McElwrath, Jr.; Spc Nicholas Miller; Spc Ismael Dejesus Pagan; Pfc Cody James Payovitch; Spc Daniel Leon Petterson; Spc Adam Charles Planner; Spc Michael Christophera Pruitt; Spc Darryell Wayne Rash; Sgt Jason Scott Reese; Ssg Philip Lee Schoenauer; Spc Gerald Alan Smith; Ssg Aaron David Snyder; Ssg Charles Derrick Spires; Sgt John Matthew Taylor; Spc Randall James Thompson; Sgt Joel Lucas Trainor; Sfc Jorge Leonardo Vera.

Ssg Robert Prentice Waller; Sgt Martin Fallon Young; Pfc Jeremy Seth Ables; Sgt Jacob Brandon Keith Abrams; Sgt Christopher Michael Ardley; Sgt Christopher Lee Armstrong; Ssg Ernest Alexander Arocha; Spc Christopher Otto Bacon; Spc Joel Christopher Baker; Spc Joseph Jacob Balbach; Sgt Randy Lane Barber; Ssg Tony Patrick Barefield, Jr.; Pfc James Dixon Barton II; 2Lt Robert G. Becotte; Pfc John Jeremiah Bettis; 1Lt David K. Bhatta; Sgt Michael Alan Blackert; Spc John Bartholomew Bonney; Sfc James Gregory Brantley; Spc Brandon Keith Brown.

Sgt Marcus Cyrus Burnette; Pfc Joseph Anthony Castro; Sgt Jeremy Daniel Chism; Sgt Aaron Len Churchwell; Spc Michael James Crill; Sgt Patrick O'Brien Cummings;

Sfc Ronald Leon Davis; Ssg Shawn Charles Denehy; Pfc William Timothy Downey; Sgt Daniel Terrence Dyer; Pfc Daniel Joseph Feldewerth II; 1Lt James H. Flaherty; Spc James Jerome Ford; Ssg Sean Edward Gallagher; Sgt Matthew Paul Garrison; Spc Christopher Thomas Gidley; Cpt Thomas Allen Goettke; Sgt Leonardo Salvador Gonzales; Pfc Rodney Glenn Harsh II; Sgt Jeffrey Lyn Jarchow.

Pfc Richard Ellis Kirkland; Spc Nathan Daniel Krueger; Sgt Joseph Eugene Lambert; Sfc Robert Paul Lee; Pfc Eric Ernesto Lopez; 1Sg Randal Morris Lovelace; Spc Lucas Richard Loxley; Sgt Danny Lee Lujan; Spc Bakar Malek; Cpt Masood Manasia; Sgt Gonzalo Manriquez, Jr.; Spc Christopher Ray Mayes; Ssg William Keith McCabe, Jr.; Sgt Joseph Karl McRorie; Pfc Albert Mendoza; Spc Trevor Eugene Michling; Spc Steven Robert Miller; Sgt Abel Montelongo; Ssg Douglas Fernando Morales; Sgt Shawn Gregory Moyer.

Spc Caleb Crawford Murphy; Pfc Cory Jason Muzzy; Spc Jason Scott Nance; Spc Enrique Naranjo Navarro; Ssg Jonathan Patrick O'Dell; Spc Kenneth Wayne Parker; Sfc Stephen Eugene Peacock; Spc Charles Aaron Pennington; Cpt Evan T. Perperis; Spc Devon J. Perry; Ssg Jeffery Edward Petsch; Spc Kevin Thomas Polen; Ssg Mario Ray Rauch; Spc Guy Anthony Reeve, Jr.; Sgt Llyas Tamir Ross; Sgt Travis James Ruble; Ssg Jeremy Craig Rutledge; Ssg Eric Sanders; Ssg Michael Shawn Sculley; Spc Keun Hoo Seo.

Pfc Scott Allen Sheehan; Sgt Albert Joshua Shy; Ssg Justin Thomas Silvers; Pfc Christopher Ray Simmons; Spc Brian Spisso, Jr.; Spc Cody Dewayen Terry; Spc Tuan Q. Thai; Spc Duong Thien Tran; Sgt Forrest Vaughn Chad Uribe; Spc Gregory Scott Vogel; Spc John Charles Vogt; Pfc Khristopher Matthew Wallace; Spc Pierce Allen Wickens; Sgt Garrett Michael Williams; Ssg Justin Thomas Wise; Cpt Dennis James Call II; Spc Andres Alberto Enriquez; Pfc David Lee Harrell; 1Lt Jason Allen Potter; Pfc John Robert Ainsworth.

Sgt Gary Don Alexander; Ssg Shawn Michael Arthur; Ssg Issac Dywayne Barnes; Pfc Dorian Antonio Barraza; Ssg Craig Allen Basso; 1Lt Ronald Andrew Bates; Pfc Derek Lee Billmire; Sgt Jason Paul Bones; Pfc Anthony M. Buntion; Spc Valentin Angel Bustos; Sfc Keith Calloway; Sgt Joe Carlton; Sfc Clarence Ernest Carson, III; Pv1 Jeffrey David Case; Sgt Carlos Rafael Castaner; Pfc Gregorio Contrerasrodriguez; Pfc Michael David Councilman; Pv2 Matthew K. Covert; Spc Dakota Carrington Crider; Ssg Anthony Derell Crutch.

Pv1 Stephen Eric Davidson; Spc Bradley Wayne Davis; Ssg Joshua Gary Dillard; Sgt Clinton Eric Douglas; Pfc Charley Eugene Etchieson, III; Cpt Michael E. Fisher; Sfc Amara Fofana; Spc Ian Allen Gallagher;

Spc Manuel Antonio Gamero, Jr.; Sgt Melville Vaughn Gibbs; Sfc Vincent Gines; Sgt Philip Henry Goldsberry; Cpt Manuel Gonzalez; Sgt William Norris Hamby; Sgt Bobby Ray Harrington, Jr.; Cpt Edward Nazario Harrison; Spc Raythan Darnell Henderson; Sgt Jose Alfredo Herrera; Ssg Cornelius James Hodges; Sgt William Andrew Housley.

Ssg Alvin York Howard, Jr.; Sgt Aaron Michael Hrdlicka; Sgt Jacob Alan Ingbritsen; Spc Joseph Swiney Jackson; Ssg Joshua Isaac Johnson; Sgt Robert James Karcz; Ssg Jeffrey Harold Kling; Pfc Jeffery Michael Kreamer; Sgt Zachary Joseph Lance; Sgt Michael Scott Lawew; Pv1 Darrin Douglas Levitan; Spc Ruben Wong Marin; Pfc Franklin Harold Matter; Sgt Christopher Ryan McCallum; Ssg Robert Thomas McDonald; 2LT Patrick M. McNamara; Sgt Danniell Lester McNeely; Pfc Bernard Kowal Means, Jr.; Spc Steven Michael Medeiros, Jr.; Pfc Michael David Meyer.

SGT Andrew John Moreno; SFC Timothy Allen Morrison; SPC Joe Abel Munoz; SSG Robert Franklin Nelson, JR.; PFC Allen Michael Odom; SGT William Donald Olli; PFC Javier Ortizrivera; PFC Raymond Andrew Palmer; PV2 Jacob Edward Peterson; 1LT Michael Robert Podojil; SPC Nathan William Possin; PV2 Christopher Chase Pugh; SPC Aaron Robert Rademacher; SGT Richard Austin Raver; CPT Ethan William Richardson; SPC Javier Rivera; SPC Steven James Schnabel; SSG Michael Shane Smithee; SGT John Eugene Sommer, III; PFC Anthony Lloyd Stevens.

PFC Joshua Alling Stezin; SGT Christopher Patrick Stokes; SSG William Eugene Stratford; SPC Clifford Lajoil Summers II; 1LT Lee S. Tilghman; SPC Mark Joseph Travitz; SPC Francisco Javier Trinidad; 2LT James Patrick Wade; SGT Travis Wayne Wagner; SPC Ian Edward Watkins; SSG Patrick Francis White; SGT Deone Lamar Whitehead; PFC Robert John Wilsman; SPC Neil Patrick Woelfel; SGT Peter Ernst Yenter; SPC Peter James Hansen; SGT Jeremiah Steven Hatch; SPC Nicholas Ryan Lester; SPC William Richard Abel II; PFC Alphonso Ronee Alford.

CW2 James Darren Allen; SGT Gabriel James Aquilano; PFC David Lee Arnett; SGT Brian Nicholas Badamy; CPT Jarrod C. Bailey; SGT Mark Angelo Bangcaya; PFC Justin Avery Banks; PFC Irvin Mark Anthony Barnett; SPC Andrew William Barone III; SGT Matthew Wayne Bonnell; PFC Joel Adam Brown; SSG Henry Burden; SGT Keith Anthony Caldwell; SGT Israel Cantu, Jr.; SGT Miguel Cipres, Jr.; SPC James Ernest Clark III; SGT Derek Bernhard Constable; SGT Joshua Lindsey Cook; SGT Ramon O. Crespongron; SPC Jason Tyler Curle.

SPC Tristan Davis; CPL Louis Michael Duran; SGT Robert Stephen Fornier; PFC Savannah Marie Freeman; ISG Brian Keith Fryer; 1LT Brian E. Gavazzi; PFC Christopher Larry Gonzales; SFC Emma Grau; SPC Nathaniel Steven Gray; SPC John Edward Green IV; PFC Tiffany Danielle Hammonds; SGT Marcus Dewayne Holder; SGT Rodney Holland; PFC Steven Anthony Hoover; SPC Shane Patrick Jauck; PFC Bryan Glynn Kelly; SPC Justin Wayne Keys; CPL Christopher Craig Land; SPC Davis Pallyn Laureta; PFC Thomas Lee.

SGT Jonathan Matthew Lehman; CPT Charles David Lewis; SGT Raymond Liddell, Jr.; SPC David Raymond Lopez; PFC Brandon Rainer Mackey; PFC Christopher Scott Mattingly; SGT Michael Reid McCloskey, Jr.; SGT Matthew Linden McGraw; PFC Javier Apolonio Medina; SGT Isaiah Matthew Melendez; SPC Shannon Lee Melendez; SPC Michael Robert Menrath, Jr.; SPC Temukisa Shantel Mewhort; SSG Ricardo Levette Monroe; SGT John Joseph Mutnansky; SGT George Eugene Myers; SSG Jim Jay Nance; SPC Jeremy Gregg Nicholson; SGT Victor Dewayne Odom; SGT Joseph Stephen Opyt.

SGT Jennifer L. Ortizchajon; SFC Marco Antonio Parris; CPL Hrair Petrosyan; SPC Justin William Phillips; SGT Steven Allen Pigg; PFC James Christopher J. Quesada; SFC Alfredo Quintero; SSG Brian Keith Reynolds; SPC Michael James Roberts; SGT Ryan Christopher Ronning; SPC Andrew Charles Ruelle; SPC Tyrone Robert Ruffin; SFC Brian Keith Sanders; SSG Daniel Sartor; SGT David Anthony Schumaker; PV2 Antonio Carlos Sellers; SSG Kyle Patrick Shook; SGT Chase Michael Smagala; SPC Brian Dee Smith; SPC Maurice Alexander Taylor.

SPC Timothy Lee Vanburen, Jr.; SSG Lewis Theodore Vann; SGT Justin Alan Walker; SPC Dustin Phillip Wilburn; SSG Patrick Kenneth Young; SGT Rachel Louise Ackerman; SPC Lorelei Leigh Corominas;

2LT Charles Nathan Davis; SPC Kristina Danielle Hilstad.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as you know, the Defense authorization bill passed the Senate last week. Like many of my colleagues, I filed an amendment to the legislation, which had been included in the committee managers' package. Unfortunately, due to procedural matters stemming from the Senate majority's decision to limit amendments, my amendment, No. 5415—and many others like it—was not permitted to move forward. Although my amendment was not able to be considered by the Senate during debate over the Defense bill, I nonetheless want to bring the issue underlying the amendment to the attention of my colleagues.

My amendment was quite simple. It was a sense of the Senate that stated that funding for Department of Defense programs involving traumatic brain injury, TBI, and psychological health should be included in the President's fiscal year 2010 base budget.

Typically, the majority of funding for such programs has been included in supplemental appropriations measures. The reasoning apparently has been that these programs are a cost of war, and therefore they should be addressed through war supplementals.

But TBI and psychological health issues are problems that have been with us for some time and unfortunately are going to be with us for the foreseeable future.

Military personnel often experience health difficulties owing to TBI and psychological injuries long after their combat tour has been completed. Moreover, it has been reported that as many as one in five military personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq will suffer from TBI. That is a significant percentage of our military. There are currently nearly 3,000 brave Kentuckians deployed in the war on terror. According to these projections, close to 600 of these brave men and women will suffer from TBI. That figure does not even include those who have already returned from theater.

Considering the long-term health ramifications of TBI and the large number of military personnel who will face these challenges, it seems to me that this reality ought to be reflected in DOD's long-term baseline budgeting rather than through ad hoc supplementals.

My amendment would have put the Senate on record as stating that TBI and psychological health issues reflect a long-term budget priority for our Nation and should be considered as part of the regular order. I believe we owe the brave men and women of our military no less.

NEPAL

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I have closely followed developments in

Nepal for several years, and have been encouraged by the progress that tiny Himalayan country is making to end a divisive, bloody conflict and become a more peaceful, just and democratic society.

An enormous amount of work remains to be done, including the writing of a new constitution, demobilization and reintegration of Maoist combatants, restructuring and reform of the Nepali Army, policies and programs to address the legacy of discrimination against women and minority groups, programs of assistance for the millions of impoverished rural Nepali people who are illiterate and lack basic services, and justice for victims of atrocities committed by both sides of the conflict.

As chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee I have included additional assistance for Nepal, above the amounts requested by the White House, for these efforts, and I commend the U.S. Ambassador, Nancy Powell, for the way that she has represented our country there. The United States has a strong interest in a democratic, peaceful Nepal, and although the situation remains fragile and the future unpredictable, Ambassador Powell and her staff have worked hard in an even-handed, diplomatic way to help keep the peace process on track.

I have also urged the leaders of Nepal's political parties, including the Maoists, to put partisan and personal interests aside for the greater good of their country at this critical time in Nepal's history. For too long, politics in Nepal have been equated with cronyism, corruption and neglect. The Nepali people who courageously took to the streets and risked their lives—some of whom lost their lives—to oust an abusive monarch, deserve a government that represents them and works to address their needs.

There are three specific issues I want to mention briefly today. The first is the treatment of Tibetan refugees in Nepal. There are disturbing reports that the Nepali Government is taking steps to forcibly return to China, in violation of international law, Tibetan exiles in Nepal, presumably in an effort to curry favor with the Chinese Government. These people have risked their lives to escape Chinese repression, and in the past the Nepali Government has, with rare exceptions, provided them refuge. The Nepali Government has a legal and moral responsibility to continue to respect the rights of Tibetan refugees, and this is an issue that the United States and others will be watching closely.

The second issue is justice, which is fundamental to any democratic society, and that means an independent judiciary and the rule of law. In Nepal, government officials who abuse their authority have too often escaped justice. Impunity has been the rule, including for members of the Nepali Army and Maoist forces.