

faint reasons for optimism. The Pakistani military spent most of August launching airstrikes against the Taliban militants attacking American forces from the fence straddling the Afghan-Pakistan border—an effort that resulted in more than 400 Taliban casualties and a shallow retreat by the terrorists. It's "shallow" because the Pakistani government followed up those airstrikes by declaring a ceasefire to coincide with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Legislators from the tribal areas promised political support for the top candidate in Pakistan's presidential election in exchange for the truce, which was announced in the days leading up to the country's vote.

Less than a week later, though, American forces finally showed signs of taking the matter of the central front of the war on terror into their own hands. A New York Times report indicated that U.S. special ops forces attacked al-Qaeda militants gathered in a Pakistani village called Jalal Khel. U.S. officials said the move might represent the early stages of a more dedicated and aggressive American presence in Pakistan in the wake of General Musharraf's resignation.

Don't get me wrong, a more sustained United States assault against the terrorists squatting in Pakistan is welcome news, and it signifies a more urgent effort to hunt down and snuff out the greatest threat to Americans' safety on our own shores.

But it's about 2,555 days late and \$11 billion short. Seven years after 9/11, the country is stoking what was supposed to be a complete and consuming "war on terror" with faint signs of a sustained operation in the country where the bad guys have been hiding for years.

How appalling. I doubt the families of the 3,000 innocents murdered on 9/11—and the 4,000 that followed them in Iraq—are content with it. After all, it's seven years, thousands of troops and billions of dollars later, and our country has failed to deliver on what we really owe them: Justice.

Nor have we answered the most important question pertaining to our nation's future: Can we really win this war with Islamic extremism? Because if we don't have the fire in our belly to defend the American troops stonewalled by the Afghan-Pakistani border; to hunt down and destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda militants camping out on the other side of that border; and do everything we possibly can to capture and kill Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, I fear we'll be left to deal with another fire—one raging in another building, burning a hole in another American city.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I rise to applaud the Senate's passage yesterday, as part of the so-called tax extenders legislation, of important tax provisions that will move our Nation toward a green economy. But I also would like to reiterate my support for our budget pay-as-you-go rule and to express my disappointment that a nonoffset version of the so-called alternative minimum tax, AMT, patch was part of the tax package the Senate passed.

With our national debt level at a record high, and growing by the day, responsible governing requires that we balance new spending and revenue reductions with decreased spending or revenue increases. I am proud to have supported Senator CONRAD's amend-

ment to the tax extenders package that would have provided for the extension of the AMT patch and other tax extenders on a fully offset basis. I also supported Senator CONRAD's effort to raise a point of order under the Senate rules against the extenders amendment which was not fully offset.

Although I strongly prefer Senator CONRAD's approach of abiding by our budget rules, I decided to support final passage of the partially offset tax package because of the many critical energy tax provisions in the bill. I have been a strong proponent of growing our green economy, which will both help us combat global climate change and encourage investment in new technologies that will create jobs and strengthen our position in the world economy. This tax extenders package includes extensions of incentives for renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, and the extension of the research and development tax credit on which businesses in Rhode Island and across the Nation have come to depend. In addition, the legislation that we passed yesterday includes a mental health parity law long championed by Congressman PATRICK KENNEDY of my State of Rhode Island and his father, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY. This landmark provision will ensure that health insurers provide mental health patients with quality coverage and will go down as one of the signature accomplishments of this Congress. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Congressman KENNEDY and the other architects of this important tax legislation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN BRUCE E. HAYS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute and express our Nation's sincere gratitude to a remarkable young soldier and his family. I was saddened to receive word that on September 17, 2008, Army CPT Bruce E. Hays of Cheyenne, WY, was killed in the line of duty while serving our country in the war on terrorism. Captain Hays died from injuries he sustained while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Gerdia Seria, Afghanistan.

Captain Hays first enlisted in the Army in 1984, and joined the Wyoming National Guard in 2000. He received his commission and became an officer later that year. He was a versatile soldier, commanding units ranging from field artillery to information technology. Captain Hays is remembered by his fellow Wyoming soldiers as an outstanding officer, commander and leader who was both loved and respected by his troops.

It is because of Bruce Hays and the blanket of freedom that he fought to provide that we sleep safely in our beds at night. The brave men and women of this Nation who answer the call to service and wear the uniform of the

Armed Forces deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. They put their very lives on the line every day for their fellow countrymen. And because of them and their families, our Nation remains safe and free in the face of danger and those who seek to harm us.

Captain Hays represents the epitome of this selfless service to a cause greater than one's self. He was deployed as chief of an Embedded Training Team, charged with mentoring the Afghan police forces to defend the people of Afghanistan against terrorism. Laying aside his own self interest, Captain Hays gave his life in a far off land helping a fledgling democracy and a newly freed people to live the dreams that freedom and liberty bring.

In the book of John, Jesus said that, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend." CPT Bruce Hays gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, for you, me, and every single American. He gave his life defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice. And there are no words to express the profound gratitude that our Nation owes this brave soldier and his family.

Captain Hays is survived by a loving family including his wife Marie and their children, Bethany, Eleanor, John, Alfonso, and Genevieve, and his parents Barbara and Leonard. He is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the Wyoming National Guard and the U.S. Army. We say goodbye to a devoted family man and an American citizen soldier. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to CPT Bruce E. Hays for his courage, his love of country and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life and will remain so in death. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family, and greet him with open arms.

STAFF SERGEANT NATHAN M. COX.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I rise today to honor SSgt Nathan M. Cox who was killed on September 20, 2008 in Korengal Valley, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Cox was serving with B Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Hood, TX, and died following the injuries that he sustained after his vehicle encountered an improvised exploding device by the roadside. I would like to express my condolences to Nathan's friends and family, in particular Nathan's parents Jane and Leslie, wife Annie, and 5-year-old daughter Sophia. They are in my thoughts and prayers.

Staff Sergeant Cox was deployed to Afghanistan in July of this year, having spent a year in Iraq prior to his arrival in Afghanistan. He had attended Davenport Central High School in Davenport, IA, and enlisted in the Army straight after leaving high school. Nathan spent 3 years in Bosnia during the mid 1990s. Then, in 2005, at age 29, he re-entered the Army to make it his career. Nathan made the ultimate sacrifice defending the country and the

people that he loved, so that those of us back home can enjoy safety and freedom. His bravery and the bravery of all of his comrades will never be forgotten by a grateful nation.

Jane Cox, Nathan's mother, said that Nathan was very interested in foreign affairs and hence chose the Army to utilize his talents. She added that Nathan had finally come to terms with his "gift of being a leader." People who knew him describe a man with a great sense of humor who always looked on the bright side of everything. It is during these times of uncertainty abroad and at home that we look to the examples set by people like Staff Sergeant Cox, who carry out their duty in a way that is both courageous and honorable. I know that Nathan did not die in vain, but his tremendous sacrifice has helped to secure peace and freedom for the United States and our allies around the world.

U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MARTINEZ. Madam President, for 219 years, the U.S. Marshals Service has helped to bring some of America's worst criminals to justice, and our Nation is a safer place because of their service. On their anniversary, I would like to offer my many thanks for their commitment to upholding the rule of law and their willingness to protect and serve Americans.

During their 219 years of service, the marshals have executed warrants, distributed Presidential proclamations, registered enemy aliens in a time of war, and helped conduct the national census. They have also ensured the safe conduct of judicial proceedings and protected Federal judges and jurors and other members of the Federal judiciary.

They lead the Witness Security Program; serving nearly 18,000 Government witnesses and their family members whose lives are in danger as a result of the witnesses' testimony against gangs, drug traffickers, terrorists, organized crime members, and other criminals.

Recently, the State of Florida enlisted the marshals' services to help combat rising instances of violent crime. During the 3-month effort, known as Operation Orange Crush, the Marshals' Regional Fugitive Task Force was responsible for arresting more than 2,400 violent criminal fugitives in Florida. The operation was an overwhelming success, and Florida is grateful for the men and women of the U.S. Marshals Service for helping to make it possible. I would like to offer my special thanks to a few of the officials who made Operation Orange Crush so successful: U.S. Marshal Service Director John F. Clark; U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Florida, Dennis A. Williamson; U.S. Marshal for the Middle District of Florida Thomas D. Hurlburt, Jr.; and U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Florida Christina Pharo.

As Americans, we are fortunate to have such a highly specialized law enforcement agency dedicated to protecting our personal freedoms and keeping criminals behind bars. I offer my heartiest congratulations to the U.S. Marshals Service on 219 good years and wish for many more to come.

TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY BROST

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I rise to recognize Ashley Brost, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Ashley is a graduate of Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, SD, and of Augustana College, where she majored in sociology. Currently, she is attending the University of South Dakota. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Ashley for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER FIERRO

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I rise to recognize Jennifer Fierro, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Jennifer was home schooled in Santa Ana, CA, and graduated from the University of South Dakota, where she majored in Spanish. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Jennifer for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO JESSIE MILSTEAD

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I rise to recognize Jessie Milstead, an intern in my Washington, DC office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past several months.

Jessie is a graduate of West Central High School in Hartford, SD, and in the spring, she will attend Northwestern College in Minnesota. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Jessie for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share

with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,000, are heart-breaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

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

It is a relief to finally see someone in our legislation coming to the people for their input! I am currently serving in the USAF, stationed at Mountain Home AFB. I work in Flying Ops. I put about 35 miles a day on my vehicle, just coming to and going home from work. The base itself is ten miles away from town; my house, about 15 miles away from the base. The average price for a gallon of unleaded here is about \$4.09. The base has up until now been able to keep its gas prices under \$4, but finally hit it this past Monday. I drive a 4-cylinder VW Jetta, with a 14-gallon tank and it costs me \$46 to fill it up. I find myself only driving to and from work, as I do not feel like I can afford to drive anywhere else, which is a bummer as Mountain Home's resources are low and if I need something that I cannot find at Wal-Mart (like clothes and shoes for my infant daughter), I have to drive to Boise to get those, or home improvement material, or clothing for myself. I also find my grocery bill skyrocketing. I used to be able to spend \$150 and get food for two weeks. I now find that \$150 lasts me about a week, which is unacceptable. I am putting so much money towards the necessities that I hardly do any of the niceties anymore. My husband has parked his truck in favor of driving his motorcycle to work everyday to save us money, and we are selling our boat as it just costs way too much to fill it up, and the truck to tow the boat to any lake. So, in the end, energy costs have driven me to only drive to and from work, sell my boat, park my truck, and spend a ridiculous amount of money on food. Thanks for your time.

JESSICA, Mountain Home.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns regarding the escalating price of living in Idaho due in large part to the ever increasing cost of energy.

I work for Alaska Airlines in Boise, Idaho. My gas bill to cover my commute has gone from \$100 to \$300 per month. Our industry has been heavily affected by the obscene rise in the cost of aviation fuel. Alaska Air is a profitable business. They've worked very hard at putting a lot of cash in the bank. They never just spent their way into bankruptcy, then emerged a few years later with all of their debts relieved.

Today, in order to stay alive, in addition to raising air fares and reducing routes, they have to charge seemingly ridiculous charges for the ordinary services associated with travel. And still the cost of fuel rises. Just today we received the "second" corporate letter, advising us that Alaska Airlines is doing all it possibly can to reduce costs, that