

now and really think about it, we are not only going to lose some of our best-paying American jobs, we are going to lose the backbone of our military might.

At a time when we are looking to create jobs and build the economy, eliminating the \$12 billion in economic activity and thousands of American jobs that are tied to the F-22 production does not make sense to me. Supporting continued F-22 production will help defend against potential threats, and, of course, it will protect family-wage jobs, and, importantly, it will preserve our domestic base.

So I urge our colleagues to oppose the amendment that has been offered.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MATTHEW SHEPARD LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I would like to speak on the National Defense authorization bill that is pending before the Senate in reference to an amendment that would be on that bill.

More than a decade ago, on a cold night in Wyoming, a young man was assaulted and killed simply for being who he was. The brutality of that murder shocked the Nation. But even more shocking was the motive for the crime. Matthew Shepard was targeted and killed that night for nothing more than his sexual orientation.

The fact that the vicious attack could occur at all is hard to believe. But the fact that it was done out of blind hatred is simply too much to bear. So we must make sure Matthew Shepard's death was not in vain.

We must shape a positive legacy from the ashes of this terrible tragedy. I believe this is the next chapter in the struggle against hatred and in the favor of equal rights. As we have been called to do throughout our history, I believe it is time to take action once again.

I rise today in support of the legislation inspired by Matthew's tragic story. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act. If it becomes law, the Matthew Shepard Act will add "sexual orientation" to the definition of hate crimes under Federal law, giving law enforcement officials the tools they need to bring all violent criminals to justice.

Many States already have hate crimes legislation on the books. I am proud to say my home State of Illinois is among them. But we need to make sure violent criminals face the same penalties in Washington as they do in Illinois and across the Nation.

Hate crimes are assaults against individuals, but they tragically target an

entire group of people. Matthew Shepard was not just a young gay man, he was a very young gay man. Colleagues, it is time to take a stand. It is time for the Senate to help end the hatred, to reaffirm our commitment to an America that is as free and as equal as our founders intended for it to be, to make sure that no American lives in fear because of who they are.

As a former attorney general of Illinois, I have been fighting hate crimes for many years. Since the very beginning of my career, I have spoken out against injustice and worked hard to end discrimination. So I understand how important the Matthew Shepard Act will be as we seek to bring criminals to justice for their actions.

But some have expressed concern about this measure. I have heard from Illinois residents who worry that this may prevent them or their religious leaders from expressing their faith. As a deeply religious American myself, I would oppose any bill that restricts our freedom of speech or our freedom of religion.

So let me assure my constituents and my colleagues that the Matthew Shepard Act applies to violent crimes, not religious speech. It will help us end murder and assault, but it will not affect the sermons people will hear every Sunday or the ability to preach the things they believe.

A decade has passed since Matthew Shepard's tragic death. We must not let another year go by without the Matthew Shepard Act as the law of the land.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation. Hopefully, we will be able to have hate crimes as a crime on the books in the Nation as well as in our States.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, so far we have been unable to obtain agreement to have a vote tomorrow morning on the Levin-McCain amendment. I am hoping we can achieve such agreement yet tonight; if not, in the clear dawn of tomorrow morning. I am disappointed we have not been able to reach agreement to go to a vote on that amendment, but that is a fact with which we will have to deal. In the meantime, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business, with each Senator allowed to speak up to 10 minutes.

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

REMEMBERING STEVEN CROWLEY AND BRIAN ELLIS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, 30 years ago this November, two Americans were killed when a mob attacked the American Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. I wish to pay tribute to those men, Marine CPL Steven Crowley and Army WO Brian Ellis.

Just a little over 2 weeks earlier, 66 Americans had been taken hostage by students in Tehran. On November 21, 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, took to the airwaves and falsely accused American troops of occupying the Great Mosque in Mecca.

Protests raged against the United States throughout Pakistan that day. A student protest formed outside the gates of the American Embassy compound in Islamabad, but it quickly turned violent. Protesters broke down part of the wall, surged into the compound, and began shooting at American forces, breaking windows, and setting fire to the buildings.

Most of the Embassy staff members were able to get to a secure communications room, where they remained for over 5 hours until the Pakistani military arrived to quell the rioters. Corporal Crowley was killed while protecting the compound; Warrant Officer Ellis was found burned to death in his apartment on the compound. Two Pakistani employees of the Embassy were also killed by rioters that day.

This weekend, survivors of that attack will meet at Arlington National Cemetery. My thoughts and prayers will be with them as they remember those whose lives were cut short that fateful day in November.

Steven Crowley and Brian Ellis died in the line of duty, serving their country and defending American lives. Their service must not be forgotten.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMENDING THE NORTH DAKOTA WHEAT COMMISSION

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I honor the North Dakota Wheat Commission.

On July 8, the North Dakota Wheat Commission celebrated its 50th year marketing and promoting wheat on behalf of my State's farm families. As the top spring wheat and durum wheat producing State in the Nation, I am proud of what the North Dakota Wheat Commission has been able to achieve for our State's producers.

The commission, created by the North Dakota Legislature in 1959, has allowed my State's farmers to become more actively engaged in the export and market promotion of our wheat crop because the commission is funded and directed by producers. During its 50 years of existence, North Dakota's average wheat production has increased from 100 million bushels to 300 million bushels annually. In that same

time period, total U.S. exports have increased from 500 million bushels to 1.3 billion bushels.

Thanks in part to the work of the North Dakota Wheat Commission, U.S. hard red spring and durum wheat are exported to more than 80 countries around the world. These exports account for 50 percent of hard red spring wheat and one-third of durum wheat. The North Dakota Wheat Commission's customer base includes markets across the globe, including Asia, Latin America and Europe.

While our wheat output and exports have increased, one thing has remained the same: My State's wheat producers have a solid reputation around the world for having a premium product. This is, in part, thanks to the hard work of the North Dakota Wheat Commission.

In closing, I again want to recognize the North Dakota Wheat Commission for a successful first 50 years and wish them continued success in the future.●

COMMENDING ERIC YANG

● Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the achievements of Eric Yang, a 13-year-old seventh grade student at Griffin Middle School in The Colony, TX. Eric recently competed in and won the 2009 National Geographic Bee, held here in Washington, DC. Out of a field of 55 contestants, one from each of the 50 States and territories, Eric won the competition in the third finals tie-breaker. Out of nine students, Eric was the only one who missed no questions. This has only occurred five times in the competition's 21-year history. In recognition of his success, Eric will receive a college scholarship worth \$25,000, a lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society, and a trip to the Galápagos Islands with the moderator of the National Geographic Bee and host of "Jeopardy!," Alex Trebek. To achieve this honor, Eric won a nationwide contest comprised of nearly 5 million students in the fourth through eighth grades who had participated in the local geographic bees held in the 50 States and five territories.

The winning question was: "Timis County shares its name with a tributary of the Danube and is located in the western part of which European country?" The answer, "Romania," was given correctly by Eric Yang after two other tie-breaker questions. Eric is the first Texan to be named champion in the competition's 21-year history. According to Eric's mother, the main reason for his success has been his curiosity, saying that it "is a major part of Eric. He reads everything from history books to cookbooks to learn about other places and cultures." Eric's desire to learn is also evident in his scholastic record. At age 13, Eric scored a 2200 on the SATs out of a possible score of 2400.

Young Texans, such as Eric Yang, prove that persistence and a curious mind are the keys to unlocking oppor-

tunities for success. I congratulate Eric on this important accomplishment and encourage him as he continues his quest for knowledge.●

COMMENDING JOE AND CHRISTINE TOWNSEND

● Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today I recognize the distinguished service of two Texans, as they approach retirement from Texas A&M in January 2010. For over 30 years, Dr. Joe D. Townsend and Dr. Christine Townsend, often referred to as "Dr. Joe and Dr. Chris" by their students, have served the students of Texas as instructors, mentors, and friends. By recognizing and cultivating the untapped potential within students, they have inspired countless youth to be men and women of character, vision, and dedication.

Dr. Joe began serving students over 40 years ago as a vocational agriculture teacher in Aubrey, TX. Since that time, he has positively impacted the lives of thousands of students through many different roles. At Texas A&M University, Dr. Joe served as a professor, associate dean for student development in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and most recently, associate vice president for student affairs. His office was known as refuge for students in need of wisdom and advice, and many relied on his support and encouragement to make the difficult transition from high school to college.

Dr. Chris' career in higher education began three decades ago at Illinois State University. At Texas A&M, Dr. Chris has served as a professor, department head, undergraduate coordinator, and undergraduate adviser in the department of agricultural leadership, education, and development. She has a gift for recognizing the unique needs of students and never failed to commit her time, energy, and resources to meeting their needs. Dr. Chris' love for teaching students has made a lasting impact on her department and her departure will leave a void that will be difficult to fill, and a legacy that will be easy to remember.

Their years of selfless service and unwavering devotion to the improvement of students' lives have earned the respect of countless Texans. I thank them for their commitment to excellence and send my best wishes for the years ahead.●

REMEMBERING JACK EBERSPACHER

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a good friend and great Nebraskan, Jack Eberspacher, who passed away on July 5, 2009, at the tender age of 55 after a short but courageous battle with cancer. Jack was a very special friend to all who knew him, dedicating his professional life to the advancement and betterment of the agricultural industry and the agribusiness community.

A native of Seward, NE, Jack received his bachelor of science degree from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. After several years working in various agribusiness positions throughout the United States, Jack was named the chief executive officer of the National Grain Sorghum Producers Association, headquartered in Lubbock, TX. He is credited with growing that association by 300 percent and with developing balanced association programs on policy, plant science and utilization, and for placing the association on the national legislative and regulatory scene.

In 1998, Jack accepted the position of chief executive officer of the National Association of Wheat Growers here in Washington, DC. Under his leadership, the organization experienced a financial turnaround, with Jack leading the group out of a negative budget in net earnings to a positive one in just over 2 years.

Jack was appointed president and chief executive officer of the Agricultural Retailers Association in 2001, where he remained until his passing. In this capacity, he increased the annual association dues revenue by more than 100 percent. In February 2002, he was the only commodity leader invited to address the National Governors' Conference, where he discussed the importance of the 2002 farm bill and the state of the agricultural economy.

Jack was also a political activist and volunteer; an active member of the Bennett Roundtable of the Farm Foundation of Chicago, Illinois; and a recipient of the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity Brother of the Century Award.

I offer my most sincere condolences to Jack's wife Jinger and their family. Jack's passion for service, dynamic leadership, and unwavering dedication to the greater agribusiness community will remain a source of inspiration to all those who knew him.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THUNDER ROAD INTERNATIONAL SPEED-BOWL

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today I honor a renowned Vermont landmark and business, Thunder Road International SpeedBowl, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this season.

Thursday nights every summer, short track races take place on Thunder Road's uniquely configured quarter-mile paved track. Thunder Road has been recognized as one of the finest short tracks in the Nation. Built in 1959 on farm land in Barre, VT, by longtime network sports commentator Ken Squier and his partners, Thunder Road is an American institution of which Vermont is proud.

Thunder Road has offered inexpensive family entertainment for five decades. This revered race track has brought international racing stars to the Green Mountain State while also offering opportunities for Vermonters