

in 2007 she became the first American woman to ever win a cross-country World Cup Title.

During his second consecutive Winter Olympic Games, James Southam competed in three events, including the 50 Kilometer Classic where he achieved a personal best finishing in 28th place. James was born and raised in Anchorage and participates in training along with Holly Brooks and Kikkan Randall at the Alaska Pacific University Ski Center. The APU Ski Center was a vital source of support for these Olympic athletes and kept many Alaskans informed of their progress through their facebook page. James, Holly, and Kikkan are a tremendous inspiration for the other skiers at APU and I look forward to hearing of more of their successes over the years.

Our Olympic Silver medalist Kerry Weiland, from Palmer, is a fierce defender on the ice. Her intensity has earned her the nickname Kamikaze Kerry, because she has the ability to take out two players with one hit. Not only did Kerry's defense help lead the U.S. to a Silver medal, but the U.S. Women's Hockey team outscored their opponents 40-2 leading up to the gold-medal game. Kerry is also a dominant force on the U.S. National Team where she was a member of the 2008 Gold Medal World Championship team. She is also the founder and instructor of the Weiland Hockey Development in Ontario where she teaches young women the fundamentals of hockey, inspiring a new generation of female athletes.

I want to thank again all the U.S. Olympic athletes for all of their hard work and dedication. It is difficult to comprehend the high degree of training and commitment required to compete in the Olympic Games and we have watched in awe as they have inspired us with their achievements. As Alaskans, we are exceptionally proud of these individuals. We regard our athletes as role models in many ways, and the sportsmanship that all our American Olympians displayed during these games exemplified some of our Nation's most important values. Our athletes were humble in victory and gracious in defeat, and made all Americans proud. I thank these individuals for being such great ambassadors for Alaska and for America.

STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of our administration's efforts to negotiate a follow-on agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, START. Our negotiating team in Vienna is currently working with the Russian delegation to finalize this agreement, and I look forward to reviewing the treaty when it is submitted to the Senate.

The United States and Russia maintain over 90 percent of the world's ap-

proximately 23,000 nuclear weapons. Each of these weapons has the capacity to destroy an entire city; collectively, they can destroy the world. The mere existence of these weapons creates the risk of a nuclear accident, unauthorized use, and theft by a terrorist group. The size and structure of the American and Russian nuclear arsenals reflect an antiquated Cold War mindset that we must move beyond.

It is in the national security interest of the United States to reach an agreement with Russia to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and ensure that strong verification and transparency measures remain in effect. This is the core purpose and focus of the START follow-on agreement.

The START follow-on agreement is an important component of our efforts to work with Russia and other international partners to collectively address the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. These dangers include the vulnerability of nuclear material to theft by terrorists, as well as the risk of nuclear proliferation by other countries.

Ratification of a START follow-on agreement would also be a clear signal that the United States is upholding our obligations under the nonproliferation treaty. It would reaffirm our leadership on nonproliferation issues and demonstrate, as the President has advocated, that we are serious about moving towards a world without nuclear weapons while maintaining a reliable deterrent for so long as it is needed. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity; without a demonstrated effort to fulfilling our nonproliferation responsibilities through a new START agreement, it will be increasingly difficult for the U.S. to secure the international support needed to address the urgent security threats posed by the spread of nuclear weapons.

The Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States concluded that "terrorist use of a nuclear weapon against the United States or its friends and allies is more likely than deliberate use by a state." Our priority, therefore, should be to work together with Russia to reduce the size and vulnerability of our nuclear arsenals, and ensure that proper security and surveillance safeguards are in place.

Unfortunately, today Russia continues to possess huge stores of nuclear materials that are inadequately secured and which, if stolen by terrorists, could be used to destroy an American city. The size of our own nuclear arsenal is also unsustainable, both from a security and cost perspective, and should be tailored to the new 21st century threats we face.

The reductions required by the START follow-on agreement will not adversely affect our national security. The United States could pursue much deeper reductions in the size of our arsenal and still have more weapons than we would ever need. In fact, it is pre-

cisely the size of our nuclear arsenal and complex that makes them vulnerable to exploitation by terrorists. There is no longer any compelling national security reason to maintain or expand the size of our nuclear stockpile.

Nor is there any reason to continue to develop new nuclear weapon technologies or warheads. Our brightest experts have concluded that we no longer need new nuclear weapons in order to maintain a credible deterrent. A recent report from the independent JASON Defense Advisory Group concluded that, as a result of our nuclear laboratories' successful life-extension programs, the lifetimes of our nuclear warheads can be extended for decades.

I am encouraged that efforts to negotiate a START follow-on agreement have bipartisan support among national security experts. Notably, the bipartisan Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, headed by former Defense Secretaries William Perry and James Schlesinger, endorsed a follow-on agreement to START. Similarly, Secretary Perry joined with former Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn and former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz to pen an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal calling for the extension of the key provisions of START and further reductions in our nuclear stockpile.

In conclusion, I commend the administration for its efforts to reinvigorate the nonproliferation regime by negotiating a follow-on to the START treaty. We must act now to address the spread of nuclear weapons and materials, which is one of the gravest dangers facing the United States. In a time of terrorism and of rising international concern about Iran's nuclear program, international cooperation remains key to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The START follow-on agreement is an essential step towards that goal, and towards a world without nuclear weapons.

HAWAII'S TSUNAMI RESPONSE

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I would like to commend the people of Hawaii for their quick response to the tsunami caused by the earthquake in Chile.

On Saturday, February 27, 2010, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Chile generated a tsunami throughout the Pacific. A tsunami warning was issued for Hawaii, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the Marshall and Solomon Islands. Additionally, a tsunami advisory was issued for the west coast of the United States and Alaska.

My staff and I monitored the situation closely, and were in contact with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and the Hawaii State Civil Defense. FEMA was monitoring the situation in Hawaii and the other

territories from the FEMA Region IX office in California and Region X office in Washington State. Supplies for any recovery effort in the Pacific are prepositioned in Hawaii at FEMA's Pacific Area Office warehouse, as well as in Guam and American Samoa. I worked to establish and maintain the FEMA Pacific Area Office headquartered in Honolulu in order to protect our isolated island communities. The office has been essential for preparedness efforts in Hawaii and critical for disaster response throughout the Pacific region.

Equally important, the actions of State and local officials and the people of Hawaii have demonstrated the value of citizen and community preparedness. Thanks to the efforts of the people of Hawaii, we were prepared to save lives and avert considerable damage had a large tsunami come ashore. Around 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, tsunami warning sirens sounded in Hawaii, which notified people to evacuate the low-lying areas. The people of Hawaii followed the directions of our local authorities, stayed calm, and evacuated all shorelines.

Hawaii is familiar with the destructive power of tsunamis. In 1960, a 9.5 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Chile generated a tsunami that killed over 60 people in Hawaii. More recently, Hawaii faced a disaster of a different kind, in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki caused billions of dollars in damage.

The Chilean earthquake reminded us that when a disaster occurs, we need to be prepared. Because Hawaii is isolated from the rest of the United States, it is even more critical that we are prepared to take care of ourselves. I want to congratulate the people of Hawaii, as well as Federal, State, and local authorities who successfully prepared for and responded to the tsunami.

While I am thankful for the tsunami's minimal impact on my home State, we cannot forget the tragedy in Chile. My thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by the earthquake.

SATELLITE TELEVISION EXTENSION AND LOCALISM ACT OF 2010

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to urge passage of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act of 2010, or STELA, as part of the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act of 2010.

Over the past 15 years, satellite television has grown into a strong competitor to cable by offering consumers in rural as well as urban markets a choice in pay television providers. Where residents once were limited to a single cable operator, satellite providers now offer most consumers an alternative. This has led to price and service competition, which is good for consumers. Congress supported such competition through the passage of the Satellite Home Viewer Act and its progeny, in-

cluding the Satellite Home Viewer Extension and Reauthorization Act, or SHVERA. And now Congress has the same opportunity with passage of STELA, which reauthorizes and extends certain communications and copyright provisions.

A decade ago, Congress, recognizing that consumers want access to local news, weather, and community-oriented programming, established a mechanism by which satellite providers could offer local broadcast stations to residents in the local market. This means that when a satellite subscriber in Huntington, West Virginia tunes-in to CBS, PBS, ABC, FOX or NBC, they hear about events in the state capital and see the successes and trials of their neighbors—not the weather in Manhattan.

Recognizing the limits of satellite providers at the time, Congress did not require the companies to offer local channels to every market in the country. Over time, this has created a division between haves and have-nots in which satellite companies are not providing local channels to residents in the smallest markets.

In West Virginia, satellite subscribers in the Parkersburg and Wheeling markets cannot receive local channels from either satellite provider. In certain other markets in the State, only one provider offers local channels. Rural consumers deserve better.

That is why I am particularly pleased that STELA provides incentives to provide local service into all 210 markets across the county, which sets the stage for consumers in even the most rural regions to gain access to local news, sports, and community programming.

Another important provision of STELA changes existing law to promote the carriage of high-definition local public broadcasting stations and to make it easier for statewide public television networks, like that in West Virginia and 14 other States, to reach every resident of the States they serve.

As some broadcast television has become coarser and less informative, the importance of the mission and programming provided by public television has grown. STELA makes sure that more satellite subscribers will have access to the compelling programming available on public television.

Passage of STELA provides us with the opportunity to encourage greater competition and access to quality programming to consumers throughout the nation. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to support passage of this important legislation.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as we move closer than ever to enacting legislation that delivers on the promise of secure and affordable health care across America, it is important to remember what is at stake and whom we are fighting for.

Over the last year, I have told many of my colleagues about the Bord family

of West Virginia and their son Samuel who suffered from leukemia.

Stories like the Bords' are a reminder that our work in Congress has a profound and personal impact on millions of lives every day. Each of us brings to this critical work the shared tragic and trying personal experiences of our friends and neighbors back home. They are real: These stories are a picture of people's lives and their pain. And we have an obligation to honor those struggles and sacrifices by working to make things better for everyone. Yet recently, radio host Rush Limbaugh sneered at the Bords' experience, describing it and other stories highlighted during last week's bipartisan health care summit as "sob stories." Always the cynic, he dismissed them entirely, "Can you believe these stories happen in America?" These stories do happen in America—every day. And it is a shame that anyone could hear of this heartbreak and fail to recognize what it says so clearly about the terrible burden our failed health care policies have placed on countless families across this country.

Rich and Amy Bord of Fairmont, WV, are two dedicated schoolteachers with health insurance through their employer. Let me repeat that: They have health insurance. Their 9-year-old son, Samuel, suffered from leukemia, and he needed significant invasive medical therapy. They thought they were covered, only to learn that their policy had a million-dollar lifetime cap. A million dollars sounds like a lot of money—and it is—they surely never would have expected to exceed it. But health care costs are spiraling out of control and the reality is, health insurance companies don't want to cover sick people.

In addition to Samuel, the Bords have two young twin sons at home, and the entire family's health care decisions were impacted by Samuel's bills.

After multiple rounds of chemotherapy and a relapse that required additional treatment for Samuel, the Bords reached their insurance fund's cap. Even with the help of my office and from the Public Employees Insurance Agency to get supplemental coverage for the Bords, Samuel still needed surgery and lots of additional care. Soon they would be approaching the next cap on their supplemental coverage. So the Bords were left with only heart-wrenching suggestions—consider getting a divorce so that Samuel would qualify for Medicaid or stop taking their other children to the doctor altogether, even if they get sick, in order to save every penny for Samuel. That is right. Get a divorce or choose one child's health care needs over another's. Those are the suggestions our Nation offered to these caring, hard-working parents with a sick child?

They did everything in their power to save Samuel, but this fall, he passed away—and there are simply no words to ease his family's loss and pain.

I understand that, to many, circumstances like these may seem rare.