

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR M.
CUMMINGS II

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge the extraordinary work of Arthur M. Cummings II, who has served with distinction for more than 20 years with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Cummings was appointed on January 9, 2008 as executive assistant director of the FBI's National Security branch. In that position, Mr. Cummings worked diligently to oversee the FBI's counterterrorism, counterintelligence, weapons of mass destruction and intelligence programs, as well as the Terrorist Screening Center. His outstanding work leading the FBI in the coordination and liaison with the U.S. Director of National Intelligence and the rest of the Intelligence community contributed greatly to the FBI and the entire intelligence field. Mr. Cummings brought to the job a wealth of investigative and managerial experience.

Since becoming an FBI special agent in 1987, Mr. Cummings was assigned to five field offices and to the Counterterrorism Division at FBI headquarters. He managed counterterrorism, counterintelligence, violent crimes and drug programs in several field offices, and had deployed overseas to support several major counterterrorism investigations.

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Mr. Cummings played an instrumental role in the reorganization of the FBI's counterterrorism program and later served as chief of the Counterterrorism Operational Response Section, responsible for the development and oversight of FBI operations in foreign theaters such as Afghanistan. In 2003, Mr. Cummings became Chief of the International Terrorism Operations Section, responsible for developing and managing FBI strategy and operations directed against al-Qaida and its affiliated organizations and networks. Mr. Cummings also served in 2004-05 as deputy director of the National Counterterrorism Center, NCTC, a multiagency organization dedicated to eliminating the terrorist threat to U.S. interest domestically and abroad.

After his tenure at NCTC, Mr. Cummings was named special agent-in-charge of the Counterterrorism Division and Intelligence branch of the FBI's Washington field office.

In recognition of his accomplishments, Mr. Cummings was awarded the 2004 Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service and the 2006 Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive. Mr. Cummings is a former Navy SEAL and speaks Mandarin Chinese. He is a graduate of the University of California in San Diego.

I, along with all of my Senate colleagues, congratulate Arthur on his well-deserved retirement after such a distinguished career.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS MORRIS
GRIFFIN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary work of Thomas Morris Griffin, Jr., during his 12 years with the U.S. Secret Service.

In his prior positions, Special Agent Griffin was assigned to train agents, handle daily operations of the First Lady Whip and protect the President of the United States. Special Agent Griffin began his law enforcement career in 1985 at the Richland County Sheriff's Office in Columbia, SC. This department of more than 300 sworn officers served a county of more than 300,000 citizens. At that agency, he served as a detective and sergeant in the Major Crimes Unit and as a team leader in the narcotic division. Special Agent Griffin also served as a Sheriff's Deputy with the uniform division, greatly enhancing the safety and security of Columbia, SC.

Special Agent Griffin received his bachelor of science in criminal justice from the University of South Carolina, received hundreds of hours of training as a special agent, and was duly recognized in 1994 with the Medal of Valor for hunting down and exchanging fire with a murderer who had shot three people, killing two of them.

Special Agent Griffin's work at the Capitol since 2007 has greatly enhanced the safety and security of United States Secret Service protectees and, ultimately, those working in and visiting the Capitol complex. He has cultivated and maintained partnerships with the United States Capitol Police, and the offices of the Senate Sergeant and Arms and House Sergeant at Arms. Through these relationships, the needs of the United States Secret Service protective missions are communicated and security plans coordinated. As he is promoted to special agent-in-charge, Special Agent Griffin leaves the United States Capitol where he has forged great partnerships as the assistant to the special agent-in-charge of the United States Secret Service Liaison Division.

I wish Special Agent Griffin all the best in his promotion and new assignment.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, as I have expressed to Senator HARKIN and to Secretary Duncan, I am concerned that the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, SAFRA, may not adequately provide for the replacement of the early college awareness, default prevention, financial literacy, and school support services that are provided by State guaranty agencies in some States. The citizens of my State rely upon the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, PHEAA, to provide these services. Over the years, PHEAA has funded these services with the earnings they have retained from their role as a State guar-

anty agency, lender, and servicer. It is my understanding that some of these earnings will no longer be available to PHEAA or to other similar agencies across the country.

Would Senator HARKIN agree that some of the services provided by these agencies are vital and should, to the extent possible, be continued?

Mr. HARKIN. I am pleased that this bill provides significant support to continue outreach and default aversion activities through the College Access Challenge Grant Program funded at \$750 million, more than double the amount we have provided for these grants in years past. However, I agree that these activities are very important and we could do more to assist students.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, as Senator GILLIBRAND and I have expressed to Senator HARKIN, we share Senator SPECTER's concerns. The citizens of our State rely upon the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation, HESC, to provide similar services, which have also been funded with the earnings HESC has retained from their role as a State guaranty agency.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask does Senator HARKIN agree that the Secretary of Education has the authority to contract for these types of services?

Mr. HARKIN. I do.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. And, Mr. President, I ask if Senator SCHUMER would also agree that in our State and many other States these agencies provide valuable services to students and families?

Mr. SCHUMER. Yes, I do. That is why Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator SPECTER, and I believe it would be beneficial for the Secretary of Education to use this authority for State guaranty agencies that provide valuable services.

FIRE GRANTS REAUTHORIZATION
ACT OF 2010

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, yesterday Senators DODD, COLLINS, CARPER, MCCAIN, and I introduced the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2010.

The bill we presented to the Senate is a bipartisan piece of legislation that provides support to our Nation's firefighters and emergency medical service responders. It reauthorizes the Assistance to Firefighters, AFG, program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program, SAFER—two highly successful programs I worked to establish in 2000 and 2003, respectively.

I think we are all aware of the great sacrifices first responders make for us. Since September 11 and the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe, firefighters in communities large and small have assumed a greater role in overall national emergency preparedness. They are now the frontline of defense in most communities for disasters of all

types. More than ever, firefighters need the training and equipment to deal not only with fires but also with hazardous materials, nuclear, radioactive and explosive devices, and other potential threats.

The demands on firefighters have increased in other ways as well. As the New York Times reported last year, firefighters are responding more and more to medical emergencies—15.8 million in 2008, a 213 percent increase from 1980. Right here in Washington, DC, at Fire Engine Company 10—known as the “House of Pain” for its grueling schedule—80 percent of the calls are for medical emergencies. Our Nation’s firefighters—like other first responders are the first to arrive and the last to leave whenever trouble hits. They deserve all the support we can give them.

Regrettably, they do not always get it. Firefighters often lack the equipment and vehicles they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. The U.S. Fire Administration reported in 2006 that 60 percent of fire departments did not have enough breathing apparatuses to equip all firefighters on a shift, 65 percent did not have enough portable radios, and 49 percent of all fire engines were at least 15 years old.

We can and should do more so that these brave men and women have what they need to protect their communities and themselves as they perform a very dangerous job. Our bill takes much-needed steps to ensure that they do.

To start with, because career, volunteer, and combination fire departments all suffer from shortages in equipment, vehicles, and training, our bill requires that each type receives at least 25 percent of the available AFG grant funding. The remaining funds will be allocated based on factors such as risk and the needs of individual communities and the country as a whole. This creates an appropriate balance, ensuring that funds are directed at departments facing the most significant risks while guaranteeing that no department is left out.

We have also taken a number of steps in our bill to help fire departments recover from the recession. Faced with economic difficulties, local governments have reduced spending on vital services, including fire departments. Among other things, these cuts have prevented many departments from replacing old equipment and forced them to lay off needed firefighters. To help departments rebuild, we have lowered the matching requirements for AFG and SAFER. Departments are still required to match some of their grant awards with funds of their own—ensuring they have some skin in the game—but the reduced amount will make it easier for them to accept awards.

We have also created an economic hardship waiver for both grant programs that will allow FEMA to waive certain requirements, such as requiring that grantees provide matching funds, for departments in communities that have been especially hard hit by tough economic times.

Our bill contains a number of other important provisions. It raises the maximum grant amounts available under AFG. As common sense would suggest, large communities often require a substantial amount of equipment, and they will now be able to apply for funding in amounts more in line with what they need.

We also would provide funding for national fire safety organizations and institutions of higher education that wish to create joint programs establishing fire safety research centers. There is a great need for research devoted to fire safety and prevention and improved technology. The work these centers do will help us reduce fire casualties among firefighters and civilians and make communities safer.

As important as it is to help our firefighters, we must also demand accountability when we spend taxpayer dollars. For this reason, we require that FEMA create performance management systems for these programs, complete with quantifiable metrics that will allow us to see how well they perform. Going forward, this will allow us to see what works in these programs and what does not so that we can make needed improvements when required.

We have also included provisions to prevent earmarks from being attached to these programs. AFG and SAFER have never been earmarked—an impressive accomplishment—and we want to keep it that way. The funding for these programs needs to go to firefighters, not pet projects.

Finally, this legislation authorizes \$950 million each for these vital programs. This is actually less than what was authorized in the past. We believe that supporting our nation’s firefighters and emergency medical service responders ought to be a priority, but we recognize that these tough fiscal times require some belt-tightening. Authorizing funding for AFG and SAFER at these amounts sends the message that Congress can direct funding where it is needed while also showing discipline.

These programs address a vital national need. Our legislation ensures that fire departments get the support they need to protect their communities while also protecting taxpayer dollars. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the reauthorization of these important programs.

IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING NICS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, April 16 marked the 3-year anniversary of the deadliest shooting rampage in our Nation’s history, a tragedy that took the lives of 32 Virginia Tech students and faculty members and wounded 17 more. In the aftermath of the shooting, investigations uncovered that the gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, was able to purchase two guns in violation of Federal law. Due to his history of mental illness, Mr. Cho was legally prohibited from purchasing these firearms. However,

the transaction was not blocked because the State of Virginia had not provided his mental health records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, NICS. The Virginia Tech tragedy serves as a somber illustration of the importance of the NICS database containing accurate criminal history and mental health records of prohibited individuals.

The Virginia Tech shooting prompted the passage of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, Public Law 110-180, which authorized funds to assist States and State courts in the automation of mental health and criminal records and in the transmittal of these records to the Federal NICS database. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, some States still have not fully digitized their criminal history records, nor do they have the funds necessary to process the transfer of State records into NICS. According to the group Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the NICS database contains less than 20 percent of the mental health records it should. In addition, according to the Brady Campaign, NICS is missing 25 percent of the necessary felony conviction data from States. These gaps in needed records weaken the ability of current Federal law to stop firearms from getting into the hands of dangerous or potentially dangerous individuals.

It is essential that States and State courts have the resources needed to ensure that the Federal background check system contains comprehensive and up-to-date records. To that end, I recently joined seven of my colleagues in urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to include \$325 million in the fiscal year 2011 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill to fully implement the NICS Improvement Amendments Act. NICS is a powerful tool in the prevention of gun violence that deserves full congressional support.

WORKER’S MEMORIAL DAY 2010

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, each year, we set aside April 28 as Workers Memorial Day, a time to remember and honor those who have been killed or injured or have contracted a serious illness in the workplace. Since the passage of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act and Occupational Safety and Health Act four decades ago, countless lives have been saved and the number of workplace accidents has been dramatically reduced.

Yet too many workers still remain in harm’s way. In 2008, over 5,200 people were killed at work in the United States and roughly 50,000 workers died from occupational diseases. Millions more were injured on the job. This means that, on an average day, 151 workers lose their lives, 14 from injuries and 137 from job-related diseases. These are workers from all walks of life—firefighters, police officers, coal miners and farmers, men and women