

More than 11,000 Arkansans on active duty and more than 10,000 Arkansas reservists have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. It is the responsibility of our Nation to provide the tools necessary to care for our country's returning servicemembers and honor the commitment our Nation made when we sent them into harm's way. Our grateful Nation will not forget them when their military service is complete. It is the least we can do for those whom we owe so much.

REMEMBERING SENATOR CRAIG THOMAS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to remember the life of Senator Craig Thomas.

Senator Thomas passed away on June 4, 2007. On that day, the people of Wyoming lost a native son. His presence back home is still missed.

One week from tomorrow will be the third anniversary of Craig's death. A column recognizing Craig's life and the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation will be circulated across Wyoming next week. It reminds us of Craig's toughness, his love for Wyoming, and his commitment to challenging young people to succeed.

It is an appropriate tribute to Senator Thomas. I ask unanimous consent that the column be printed in the RECORD.

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

CRAIG THOMAS—A LIFE'S WORK GOES ON (By Gale Geringer)

It's hard to believe that June 4th marks the third anniversary of Senator Craig Thomas' death in 2007.

Craig's wisdom and dedication to Wyoming people is dearly missed.

The passion he had for making Wyoming an even better place lives on strong when we need it most. In these economic times, when some young people have an especially tough time with financial or family issues, Craig Thomas' dedication to our future is an example we need to remember.

Craig was compassionate but it came with toughness. He respected young people and so expected a lot of them. He encouraged our youth to succeed and he approached that from the standpoint of a Captain in the United States Marine Corps. He taught personal responsibility and self reliance. He believed in being on time and ready to learn or work.

Craig motivated thousands of young people, urging them to be the best they can be, whatever their circumstances. He didn't come from money and didn't place a lot of value on pedigrees. He believed each individual had it within him/herself to rise above hardships and become productive, contributing members of society but he also recognized that everyone learns at a different level.

So for kids who might have fallen through the cracks, or were in the middle or bottom of their class, what a welcome inspiration they could find in Craig Thomas.

The Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation is born directly from that ethic and from the life-long experience and caring counsel of his wife, Susan.

The Foundation, now in its third year, continues to fulfill a promise and helps young

people try for that second, third, even fourth chance at education and life fulfillment.

With scholarships to Wyoming's community colleges, the University, vocational and technical schools or online education, the Craig and Susan Foundation is changing lives. The Foundation believes that it doesn't matter where students are from, what their grade point average was, or whether they had excelled in something before. It matters that today they want to try and know that someone cares.

In addition to its other programs, the Foundation also gives annual leadership awards to adults who work to support at-risk youth in Wyoming, mentoring, educating or counseling children to achieve their goals.

One scholarship recipient, who is finishing his second year in college, tells this story, "My early years were spent in various stages of poverty, abuse and neglect. I spent my teen years in foster/legal guardian care situations. I am and will remain drug free. I choose my circle of friends wisely. Now I'm majoring in Business Management at LCCC where I am getting good grades. It is very expensive and I need help. I ask for your assistance in helping me to make the very best of my life. College expenses are the greatest obstacle between me, my education and my success as a self-reliant, valuable member of my community."

To date, 53 scholarships have already been awarded, including five to students who are older and have been able to improve their job prospects because they've obtained degrees or certificates.

The idea is simple. Our children deserve an opportunity to build happy and successful lives for themselves regardless of power or place. And when and if they fail, we have a responsibility to show them another way and offer them another chance.

Craig Thomas never thought he would grow up to be a United States Senator. He was a humble kid from outside of Cody who liked people and was willing to work hard at whatever he did. He would have also told you that there were special people in his life that pushed, prodded and, at times, literally willed him to succeed.

Not all of the students who are awarded a scholarship from the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation and receive mentoring from Susan Thomas will become elected leaders some day. But one thing is sure, they WILL build Wyoming's workforce and they are inspiring assets to a better state—because they pulled themselves up by their bootstraps . . . with a little help.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize and shine a light on the needs of our foster children in Arkansas and across the U.S. and to highlight the countless men, women, and families who work tirelessly on their behalf.

Arkansas has more than 3,500 children in foster care. It is imperative that we ensure their safety and well-being and work to find them a permanent family to provide the love and support they need and desire. That is why I have introduced my Child Welfare Workforce Study Act, which will help identify the barriers that prevent children and families from accessing the essential services they need. It will also better ensure that necessary steps are taken to recruit and retain a qual-

ity and experienced workforce that can effectively address the needs and risks of our Nation's most vulnerable children and the families that provide them care.

With thousands of children in Arkansas seeking nothing but a safe and stable family to provide them comfort and security, we have a responsibility to ensure that families are adequately prepared to provide them with the care and supervision they deserve. These families should be appropriately supported and equipped with the resources they need.

Our current system is burdened by the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining enough families to care for and welcome these children into their homes, and experienced caseworkers to effectively manage their cases. We have children slipping through the cracks, and that is simply unacceptable. We need to create an environment that best provides for the well-being of these children and that most effectively helps them find a loving and permanent home.

I have also introduced the Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Act, which establishes much-needed standards of consistency in agency and state policies for foster and adoptive care. It also calls on agencies to follow best practices proven to increase and retain the number of foster, adoptive and kinship parents. These practices include efforts to allow foster parents to actively participate and have input in the case-planning and decision-making process regarding the child; to receive complete and timely responses from the agency; and to receive support services and appropriate training that will enhance the skills and ability of resource parents to meet their children's needs. Finally, the bill establishes a grant program to better allow states to develop innovative methods of education and support for families.

As lawmakers, it is our role to honor the critical role that foster families play in the lives of foster youth and provide them with the services and the support they need. Foster children seek nothing more than a safe, loving and permanent home, and resource families often help address this need. By strengthening efforts to recruit and retain these families, we also enhance our best recruitment tool, and retain prospective adoptive resources.

As members of this body, we have an obligation to do right by those whom we represent each and every day. We also have a moral obligation to do everything we can on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society. For the over 500,000 children in foster care and the many thousands of families who have provided them with the love and support they desperately need, it is the least we can do.

EARMARKS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, with all of the recent talk of earmarks,

I want to share an op-ed that I wrote for the Nashville Tennessean and appeared in that paper on May 19 about the importance of asking Congress to fund Tennessee projects. Following is the text of that article:

In 2007, the Corps of Engineers told me that two big flood control dams on the Cumberland River system were near failure. I asked for and Congress approved \$120 million to begin repairing Center Hill and Wolf Creek Dams.

During the recent flood, these repairs kept water levels higher behind these dams, which in turn kept millions of gallons out of the Cumberland River. According to the Corps, if Wolf Creek Dam had failed, flooding in Nashville would have been 4 feet higher. My \$120 million appropriation request was called an "earmark."

Here is another "earmark." In 2003, 40 Clarksville community leaders visited me in Washington. They and the commander of the 101st Airborne, GEN David Petraeus, wanted new housing for soldiers returning from Iraq. This was their top priority, but the money was not in President George W. Bush's budget. Over 3 years, I asked for \$196 million. Congress approved. By 2007, when the most-deployed troops in America came home, new housing was ready.

Some say abolishing such earmarks will help solve Washington's out-of-control spending. I say this is a hoax, for two reasons:

1. Abolishing earmarks doesn't reduce the Federal debt one penny. If I ask for a Tennessee project and Congress approves, other spending in the budget is reduced by an equal amount. This debate over earmarks is a sideshow. The main show is the Democratic budget that would double the Federal debt in 5 years and triple it in 10. The way to control Federal spending is, first, to limit growth of discretionary spending to 2 percent a year—40 percent of the budget—and, second, to slow down automatic entitlement spending—most of the rest of the budget. Earmarks total 1 percent of all spending—and, again, earmarks add zero to total spending.

2. Under article I of the U.S. Constitution, only Congress—not the President—appropriates funds. When Tennesseans come to see me about making Center Hill and Wolf Creek Dams safe or improving housing at Fort Campbell, my job is not to give them President Obama's telephone number.

Some appropriations are vital.

Then, you might ask, why all the fuss? Because some Members of Congress have abused earmarks. Some ask for silly ones. Some ask for too many. Two were convicted of taking campaign contributions in exchange for recommending projects. Perhaps a senator is more likely to vote for a bill that includes his or her appropriations amendment—but this can be said about any amendment to any bill.

My view is that if you have a couple of bad acts on the Grand Ole Opry, you don't cancel the Opry, you cancel the acts. That is why some Congressmen lose elections and some are in jail. That is why Congress ended middle-of-the-night earmarks and even required its Members to attest that appropriations do not benefit them or their families. That is why 2 years ago I voted for a 1-year moratorium on earmarks to encourage more reforms. Now I am cosponsoring Senator Tom Coburn's legislation to put all earmarks on one Web site to make them easier to find. Tennessee projects already are on my Web site.

Some specific appropriations are vital to our State, and to our country. The Human Genome Project was an earmark. The Man-

hattan Project that won World War II was an earmark.

It might be easier for me to say, "OK, no more earmarks." Then I wouldn't have to explain them in articles like this. But how would I explain to Clarksvillians why soldiers returning from Iraq didn't get new housing or to Nashvillians why the water was 4 feet higher during the flood? Make no mistake: If I had not asked, there would not have been enough Federal money for that housing or to repair those dams.

Just last week, the President asked for specific appropriations for the gulf coast oil spill, but not for flooding in 52 Tennessee counties. I did ask, and the Senate Committee approved. I did not want Washington to overlook the worst natural disaster since the president took office just because Tennesseans are cleaning up and helping one another instead of complaining and looting. Sometimes the job I was elected to do includes asking Congress to fund worthwhile Tennessee projects.

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW BERGER

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions of one of my staff members, Matthew Berger, during his nearly 5 years of service to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and to the people of this country. Matthew has decided to begin a new professional chapter in his life, and when he leaves the Senate this month, there will be a noticeable void in my staff.

Matthew began his work with the committee in September 2005, starting as a special assistant to the staff director and quickly transitioning to become a professional staff member the next year. In his role as professional staff, Matthew became my principal adviser on economic matters, and he helped me develop legislation and policy ideas on a host of issues, from the annual Federal budget process to Social Security and pensions. For the last 2 years, Matthew has served as economist and press secretary for my committee staff, a far-reaching role that afforded him the ability to display his many talents, including his strong writing style and vast knowledge of all matters pertaining to the Nation's financial system.

Over the past several years, Matthew has played a critical role in assisting me to develop and introduce legislation on a variety of issues. His research efforts were crucial in my developing the Home Office Tax Deduction Simplification Act in both the 110th and 111th Congresses, as well as numerous amendments to a variety of bills, including the recent financial regulatory reform legislation. Matthew was my lead staff member for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as well as for the yearly budget resolution, and as such, he is certainly well versed in the Senate amendment process. Matthew's efforts to promote my legislative priorities frequently helped me attract a broad coalition of cosponsors. Matthew has also helped me draft detailed editorials for several national and local Maine publications.

Prior to joining my committee staff, Matthew spent 5½ years working on tax issues for Deloitte Tax LLP and developing a solid understanding and knowledge of our Nation's tax policy, making him a tremendous asset as soon as he began his work on the Hill. As a national tax manager, Matthew advised numerous clients on the impacts of tax law, helping them anticipate and adjust to any changes in the law. During his time at Deloitte, Matthew authored several articles and portions of books, and contributed frequently to *Tax News & Views*, one of the company's publications for its clientele. Additionally, he was instrumental in the design, launch, and management of *Tax News & Views: Health Care Edition*, which highlighted recent judicial, regulatory, and tax developments regarding health care. Matthew also served as a research assistant at the Hoover Institution during his time at Stanford University, where he earned his degree in economics.

Matthew's next endeavor takes him to the National Multi Housing Council, where he will be the vice president of tax. I am confident that they will benefit greatly from Matthew's unparalleled knowledge of the Tax Code, as well as his admirable work ethic and tremendous dedication to what he does. They will also be getting a true team player—someone who establishes and cultivates strong relationships with his colleagues. And despite the whirlwind Senate schedule, Matthew frequently found the time on Monday evenings to platoon at first base for my office's softball team, "Snowe Business."

Over the past 5 years, I have been consistently impressed by Matthew's passion for public service. I am grateful for his incredible willingness to work long hours to help me prepare for hearings and meetings, and I am indebted to him for his involvement in helping shape some of the most significant domestic legislation of our lifetimes. From the economic stimulus legislation we passed last February to the financial regulatory reform bill we completed just last week, Matthew has been a key asset in a number of considerable policy matters during his time on the Hill. I will miss his tremendous contributions to my office and his remarkable analytical skills and institutional knowledge. While I am sad to see him leave, I wish both he and his beautiful wife LaNitra the best in their incredibly bright futures.

TRIBUTE TO WALTON GRESHAM, III

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate my friend, Mr. Walton Gresham, III, from Indianola, MS, who has been awarded the National Propane Gas Association's Bill Hill Award. This is a significant achievement that deserves recognition from the U.S. Senate. This award was established in honor of individuals who have made outstanding and lasting