

suffering. Tell them what we have to go through just to live here. Can't our Government at least provide basic protection from crime? These are members of the family of Robert Krantz, who was brutally gunned down, and fellow ranchers in the area and other citizens who live in the small communities there. They believe their government has abandoned them. They look right into our eyes and say: What are you going to do about it?

The best we can do is to tell you the fear they have, the suffering they have gone through, the difficulty they have continuing to live in an area, as I said, in which some of their families have lived for four and five generations, to pass that message on to my colleagues and say: OK, if it is the environment you care about, there is a reason to be there; if it is crime, there is a huge reason to be there; if it is the cost to the Federal and State government, we need to get hold of this problem. But if you just care about the people who are there, we have an obligation as their representatives to assure their protection, and that is the message we are coming to the floor today to convey to our colleagues. Please listen, if not to us, to our constituents, and remember we all work for all of the people of the United States of America. We are all Senators. So every one of us here has an obligation to the folks—yes, in your State but also to the folks in our State—to at least provide them the basic protection and give them a sense that they do not live in a Third World country between the United States and Mexico; that they are American citizens deserving of the protection of the U.S. Government.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, there is no way I can elaborate on that very strong statement, so I yield the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS AND HOMELESS VETERANS WITH CHILDREN ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S. 1237, the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act of 2010.

I just had the opportunity to meet with an amazing woman named Natalie and her two children who are actually here in Washington right now.

Natalie is currently living in Issaquah in my home State of Washington—but she has been through some tough times over the past few years.

She is a Navy veteran and a single mom. But she became homeless in 2007 when she couldn't find work and had to move out of the house she was staying in.

Like most moms, Natalie wanted nothing more than to provide her two children with the stable and loving home every family deserves—so she fought to secure transitional housing, and she was very fortunate to find a

program called Hopelink in Washington State that gave her the support she needed to get back on her feet.

Natalie is now back in stable housing, taking care of her children, and advancing in her nursing career—and she is here in Washington, DC, today to help make sure no other family has to face the challenges she overcame so bravely.

Unfortunately, not every family gets the support that Natalie's did.

Homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children are two terribly vulnerable groups that are growing by the day.

Back in my home State of Washington, veterans service organizations and homeless providers have told me they are seeing more homeless veterans coming for help than ever before.

And, unfortunately, more and more of these veterans are women, have young children, or both.

In fact, female veterans are between two and four times as likely to be homeless than their civilian counterpart and they have unique needs and often require specialized services.

That is why I introduced the Homeless Women Veterans and Homeless Veterans with Children Act with Senator JACK REED and Senator TIM JOHN-SON.

This legislation would take three big steps forward toward tackling the serious problems facing this vulnerable group.

First of all, it would make more front-line homeless service providers eligible to receive special needs grants.

This would help organizations in Washington State and across the country help support families like Natalie's.

It would also expand special needs grants to cover homeless male veterans with children, as well as the dependents of homeless veterans themselves.

And it would extend the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to provide workforce training, job counseling, child care services and placement services to homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children.

It is so important that we not just provide immediate support—but that we also make sure our veterans have the resources and support they need to get back on their feet.

In addition to helping homeless veterans, S. 1237 also includes a number of other provisions aimed at supporting our nation's heroes.

It extends eligibility to health care for certain veterans with disabilities who served in the Persian Gulf war.

It would establish a medical center report card to allow veterans and their families access to transparent performance comparisons between VA facilities and between VA and non-VA sites.

And it would direct the VA to enable State veterans' homes to admit parents who had a child die while serving in the Armed Forces.

This is a very personal issue for me. Growing up, I saw firsthand the many ways military service can affect both veterans and their families.

My dad served in World War II and was among the first soldiers to land on Okinawa. He came home as a disabled veteran and was awarded the Purple Heart.

Like many soldiers of his generation, my father didn't talk about his experiences during the war. In fact, we only really learned about them by reading his journals after he passed away.

And I think that experience offers a larger lesson about veterans in general. They are reluctant to call attention to their service, and they are reluctant to ask for help.

That is why we have to publicly recognize their sacrifices and contributions.

It is up to us to make sure that they get the recognition they have earned.

And it is up to us to guarantee that they get the services and support they deserve.

This bill passed through the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support, and that is how it should be, because supporting our veterans shouldn't be about politics—it should be about what kind of country we want the United States to be and about what our priorities are as a nation.

In his second inaugural address in 1865, President Lincoln said our Nation had an obligation to "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

Now, in 2010, I believe we not only need to care for him—we need to care for her and for his and her families and for every man and woman coming home after serving our country so bravely.

That is why I am proud to stand here today for Natalie, her children, and families just like hers across the country—to urge my colleagues to support S. 1237, the Homeless Veterans and Other Veterans Health Care Authorities Act of 2010.

I hope we can pass this expeditiously off the floor and get these services out to the men and women who have served us all so well.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

METRO SAFETY

Ms. MIKULSKI. What morning business this is. For those of us in the National Capital region, this is indeed a very solemn day. One year ago today, nine people died on Washington's

Metro. We were shocked and horrified when a red line Metro train struck another train. Eight passengers were killed, including one Marylander from Hyattsville. A train operator also died, and over 50 passengers were injured.

Those men and women died not as a result of a terrorist attack or of sabotage, these deaths happened because of Metro. It was a failure of management, it was a failure of technology, and it was a failure of the culture of safety at Metro.

Today our hearts go out to those families, those who lost loved ones and those who bear the permanent injuries of that fateful day. Since that day there have been 4 more deaths at Metro. This brings the total to 13 deaths in the last year. Let me repeat that—13 people died by Metro in the last 12 months.

After that June 22 crash 1 year ago, four Metro employees died on the job. One last August was a track repairman from Silver Spring who was hit by maintenance equipment. In September, another employee died. A communications technician was hit by a train. In January, two more Metro employees died. They were automatic train control technicians when they, too, were struck by a maintenance truck.

Well, in December, I said enough is enough. We always say a grateful nation will never forget after a terrible accident and we go to a memorial service. Well, for me what happened at Metro was not a memorial service, it was a call to service and for action by us. The best way we can honor the memory of those who died and those who were injured is to reform Metro.

I have called for that reform. In December during my testimony on rail safety legislation I introduced, I spoke out and said it was time for change at Metro. They needed new leadership. They needed a fresh approach. They needed to adopt a culture of safety that was unrelenting in terms of their focus on the details to protect the people who work on the Metro and the people who ride the Metro.

I was shocked to learn there are no Federal safety standards for any Metro. So whether we are talking about the National Capital region Metro or New York's subway system or California's subway system, there are no Federal safety standards.

That is why I worked with NTSB and the Federal Transit Administration to develop legislation that would do two things: give our own U.S. Department of Transportation the authority to establish and enforce Federal safety standards so we would have uniformity, conformity, and metrics for measuring safety on the Metro that we help fund. It also would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to implement the National Transportation Safety Board's recommendation list which includes requiring that railcars have crashworthy standards, emergency entry and evacuation standards, and regulations for train operator shifts.

We have safety standards for commercial airplanes. We have safety standards for buses that carry passengers. But we do not have safety standards for railcars that are used in subways. I think that is wrong.

What we also found was that safety inspectors that are part of a unique governing system were denied access to the Metro tracks. That is when we said we needed to find out what was going on. I called for a Federal audit of Metro, a Federal investigation of just what was going on there.

Thanks to Secretary LaHood and FTA leader Peter Rogoff, well known to those of us in the Senate, they did an outstanding audit which was indeed an outstanding service for us all. Their findings were shocking, hair-raising, and chilling. What did we find out?

Supervisors and train operators did not exactly know where Metro workers might be doing maintenance on the tracks until they actually saw them. Can you imagine? People driving the train had to see with their own eyes their workers to make sure they did not hit them.

There was no technological warning system. Operators weren't given the exact location of workers on the tracks. Information was generalized and workers were often in different locations than what operators were told. So the Metro itself was a lethal tool. Metro did not have the manpower to implement its own safety programs. It did not have a list of the top ten safety hazards and concerns. The list goes on and on about the audit.

I held a very vigorous oversight hearing, both Senator CARDIN and myself. We pushed Metro to come up with a checklist for change. We insisted that they come up with this checklist. I demanded that they give it to us right then and there.

They told me they were going to be working on it, and I said: Look, tell me what you are going to do. Well, listen to how ground shaking it was: Replace the oldest railcars on the fleet, develop a realtime automatic train control redundancy system, strengthen the expertise of the safety department, complete the roadway worker protection program, develop a training and certification program for bus and rail personnel, strengthen employee knowledge of rules and rules compliance, develop an accident and investigation database, create a strong internal training tracking database, fill vacancies in the safety department, and improve the agency's safety culture.

Imagine, it took a Senator holding a public hearing to get a must-do list on the safety list for change. This is unacceptable. We have to make sure we have Federal legislation. We need to do two things: We need to have Federal legislation, and we need to have Federal funding.

I want to make sure we save lives on the Metro. This is why I introduced safety reform legislation. I understand the Banking Committee is considering

it. Well, the Banking Committee needs to pass it, and the Banking Committee needs to pass it before the July 4 work break.

I know the Banking Committee has a lot on their plate. I know they are trying to regulate Wall Street. Good for them. Three cheers for them. We want that. But while we are making sure people do not lose their money on Wall Street, we have to make sure they do not lose their lives on Metro. So I ask our friends on the Banking Committee, could we kind of get this done this week, next week, before the July 4 break?

The bill does three things: It gives the Secretary of Transportation the authority to establish and enforce safety standards, including those standards for railcars and making sure there is an employee safety certification training program; it also requires oversight of the agencies monitoring safety to be independent; it funds federally approved State oversight agencies to make sure they have the rules of the road and the resources to do it because we regulate so much of this at the State level.

I am pretty worked up about this. I hope we move the bill. I hope we move it before the break.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEMIEUX. I ask unanimous consent to speak until the Senate goes into recess at 12:30.

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

OILSPILL RESPONSE

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I come to the floor, as I did yesterday and last week, to talk about the economic and environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico and the lack of response by this government in dealing with the disaster. Everything that can be done should be done to stop this oil from coming on our beaches, from going into our coastal waterways, and from damaging our way of life on the gulf coast.

I specifically come to talk about what is happening to Florida. For the last week, I have been making statements and questioning why there are not more skimmers off the coast of Florida. I have been asking for more skimmers to be sent to the Gulf of Mexico for many weeks.

A week ago today, I met with the President, ADM Thad Allen, and other State and local officials in Pensacola to address many issues concerning the response to the oilspill. At that time, we were told there were 32 skimmers off the coast of Florida. Today, we are told there are 20. It makes no sense