

REMEMBERING THEODORE H. FOCHT

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of Theodore H. Focht, a former lawyer, educator, and public servant who passed away on April 22, 2010, at the age of 75. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife of 53 years, Joyce, his sons, David and Eric, and his grandson Jason.

Over the course of more than four decades, starting with his graduation in 1959 from law school at the College of William and Mary, Theodore—or Ted, as he was more commonly known to his family and friends—enjoyed an illustrious legal career that took him from academia to the halls of Congress to senior leadership positions at the Securities Investor Protection Corporation, or SIPC. Throughout his career, Ted earned a well-deserved reputation as an extremely knowledgeable and experienced voice on matters related to securities law and as a dedicated and hardworking public servant.

Following a stint as a legal assistant at the Securities and Exchange Commission in the early 1960s, Ted became a faculty member at the University of Connecticut School of Law in my home State, where he taught classes on securities regulation, administrative law, and property law. In 1969, Ted took a leave of absence from his work at UCONN and moved to Washington, DC, to take on a temporary assignment as special counsel to the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.

When Ted took that position on Capitol Hill, the House Commerce Committee was in the middle of working to pass legislation that would provide critical new protections to U.S. investors from bankrupt and financially troubled brokerage firms. As the committee's special counsel on securities policy, Ted jumped right into the issue, playing an absolutely instrumental role in crafting the Securities Investor Protection Act. This legislation, which was signed into law by President Nixon, created the SIPC—a nonprofit entity that insures the assets of investors against brokerage firm failures—and with it, an important new layer of security and sense of confidence for Americans who wanted to invest in the stock market.

But Ted's work on investor protection issues did not end with the enactment of that landmark bill. Following its creation, Ted became the SIPC's president and general counsel, where he successfully shepherded the corporation through its first two decades of existence. Between 1971, when he took the helm at the SIPC, until 1994, when he retired from the corporation, Ted became inextricably linked to the organization's work and mission. Indeed, I believe that Ted's work with SIPC, both in helping to build the organization as a young congressional staffer and run it after establishment, are among the most striking aspects of his impressive professional legacy.

And so I would like to take this opportunity today to thank Ted for his years of dedication to the law—whether as a professor helping to shape the minds of young law students at UCONN, or as a senior executive at the SIPC working to build a safer environment for Americans to invest.

And I once again extend my most heartfelt condolences to all of the people who knew and loved him.●

REMEMBERING SERGEANT ORVILLE SMITH

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I honor the life of a true American hero. Police SGT Orville Smith, a 39-year veteran of the Shelton, CT, Police Department, died July 7, 2010, of injuries he sustained while in the line of duty. I express my deepest condolences to his family, colleagues on the Shelton Police Force, and the entire community of Shelton for this tragic loss.

It goes without saying that American law enforcement officers such as Sergeant Smith are a very rare and special breed. Every day, police officers around the country go to work with a singular objective—to selflessly protect the communities and the people that they know and love. It is an incredibly rewarding career, but one fraught with potential dangers and sacrifices. And unfortunately, men and women in law enforcement are all too often forced to make the ultimate sacrifice, giving their own lives in defense of their fellow citizens.

That is exactly what Orville Smith, the first Shelton police officer to be killed in the line of duty since 1964, did. Late in the evening on July 3, while directing traffic outside of a local fireworks event commemorating the July 4 holiday, Sergeant Smith was struck by a drunk driver. He passed away 4 days later, leaving behind a loving wife, two children, four grandchildren, and a legion of fellow police officers who, during his nearly four decades of service on the force, came to know Sergeant Smith for his fearlessness and unflinching dedication to his job.

Indeed, to say that Sergeant Orville Smith was committed to public service and helping his fellow citizens regardless of the personal sacrifice required is, in my view, a bit of an understatement. From his service as a U.S. marine in the Vietnam war to his work as a volunteer firefighter, Sergeant Smith made protecting and defending his community and countrymen his life's mission.

While he planned to retire from the force next year, his heart truly belonged to the Shelton Police Department. It is therefore fitting that Shelton Police Chief Joel Hurliman called him “one of the bravest guys I ever met” and went on to say, “He wasn't scared of anything, except retirement.”

It was that kind of professional dedication and unwavering commitment to public service that made Sergeant

Smith not only an exemplary police officer but a wonderful human being. He spent his entire life devoted to helping others and relished every minute of it. Several weeks ago, on the eve of Independence Day, he died that way, too—loyally and courageously fulfilling his duty to “protect and serve” until the very end.

I express my deepest gratitude to Sergeant—Smith or “Smitty”, as he was more commonly known by his friends at the Shelton Police Department—for his tremendous record of service to the people of my State and the Nation. I once again extend my most heartfelt condolences to all those who knew and loved him. While the death of a loved one is never easy to accept, it is my hope that the fact that Sergeant Smith died doing what he loved will bring them some measure of comfort during the months and years ahead.●

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT STEVEN VELASQUEZ

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to LT Steven Velasquez, who sadly lost his life on July 24, 2010.

We have all felt our chests tighten and our pulses quicken with anxiety at the sound of a fire engine screaming through town. For most of us, this signals two important things: There is an emergency somewhere nearby, and—more importantly—that help is on the way.

Of course, for the people riding on those rigs, all the commotion is just another day at the office. They are focused solely on the task at hand.

When the unthinkable happens—a devastating hurricane, industrial accident, terrorist attack, or three-alarm fire—these brave men and women are the first on the scene and the last to leave. In between, they give all they have to make sure the emergency is contained and our communities are safe.

They do this every day of the week, every week of the year. Being a firefighter certainly isn't a job for the faint of heart. In fact, it is not so much a job as it is a calling.

At least it was for Steven Velasquez. His 20-year career took him from a position with the Fire Department of Prince Georges County, MD, to the rank of Lieutenant in the Bridgeport Fire Department in my home State of Connecticut.

Along the way, he built a reputation as a tremendously dedicated team member and as someone whose discipline and bravery made him a leader. This reputation, and the urging of many of his colleagues, helped secure him a place on the department's elite Rescue Squad—despite the fact that there were others in line for the prestigious assignment before him.

In his 16 years in Bridgeport, Velasquez never took a sick day. He was committed to his family, his community, and to his fellow firefighters.

His attitude and work ethic led to his being awarded the Bridgeport Fire Department's third highest honor in 2000, the Medal of Merit.

But awards and accolades were not why Lieutenant Velasquez became a firefighter. In fact, he never displayed the many citations he had received throughout his career on his uniform. He also turned down a job with the New York City Fire Department.

The reason being?—Bridgeport has more fires.

For Lieutenant Velasquez, and firefighters all over our Nation, the call to serve means facing danger every day. The commotion of an emergency becomes secondary to the need to help people, and the dangers they personally face must take a backseat to the task at hand.

That was the case on the afternoon of July 24, 2010, when Lieutenant Velasquez and his colleague, Michel Baik, were conducting a search-and-rescue mission on the third floor of a burning house in Bridgeport. They were deep into the blaze, looking for anyone who may need help, and trying to ventilate the structure.

None of the inhabitants of the home were injured. But tragically, both of these courageous men lost their lives, despite the quick action of their colleagues to pull them out of danger and get them to the hospital.

Tragedies are inherent in this profession, and the risks are shared by every single person who has ever gotten the call, rushed to their gear, and has run headlong into danger in order to save the life of someone else. These shared risks help to bind those called to take them together in a solemn way.

Firefighters will do anything for one another, both on the job, and when the worst happens. The more than 7,000 of their fellow firefighters—from as far away as western Canada—who attended the memorial services for Steven Velasquez and Michel Baik were an impressive testament to that bond.

I believe that the eulogy offered in tribute to Lieutenant Velasquez by International Association of Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger at his memorial service speaks well of this solemn commitment. Through these difficult times, the community which Steven served, and those he served with, can provide support and comfort to his loved ones.

Of course, no tribute will ever be enough to ease the suffering of their families. I offer my deepest condolences to Lieutenant Velasquez's wife Marianne, his son Aaron, his daughter Salina, and to his entire family. Their sacrifice is unimaginable, and they will always be in our thoughts and prayers.

I know that we can never make this right for them. But we must celebrate the life and service of Lieutenant Velasquez and make sure that his memory—as a role model and true hero—live on and help to inspire others to take up the call to serve.

I ask to have printed in the RECORD President Schaitberger's words to which I referred.

The material follows:

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

President Harold Schaitberger

EULOGY FOR LT. STEVEN VELASQUEZ, BRIDGEPORT LOCAL 834, FRIDAY, JULY 30, 2010

Lieutenant and IAFF Local 834 member Steven Velasquez—just 40 years on this Earth—was taken too soon.

To Steven's mother, Carol, thank you for giving me the honor of being here today to celebrate your son's life.

To his bride Marianne, his son Aaron and his daughter Salina, to his sister Cindy and his brother Jason, to his family and friends, to his brothers and sisters in the Bridgeport Fire Department, and to his extended fire fighter family, I have traveled here today to make sure you know that the thoughts and prayers of our General Secretary-Treasurer, our entire International Executive Board, and the more than 298,000 members of the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Bravest in North America, are with you today.

I know that my words won't make you forget your pain or forget your loss.

But I hope I can help you understand that to those of us who have come from cities and towns across two great countries—"Stevie V." was family to us.

Even though many of us didn't have the privilege of knowing Stevie personally, we know who he was.

We know him because there is so much about those who enter this profession of ours that are so similar.

A quiet courage, humble, understated—never wanting to bring attention to themselves or their work.

Their willingness to serve a community and a public and their readiness to sacrifice—that's how we know who "Stevie V." was.

Everyone who goes on what we call "The Job" becomes part of this extended family.

We all know what this career can demand and we all know how cruel the consequences can be.

Everyone who has taken the oath to serve in our profession comes into it knowing the risk, and being here today reaffirms just how dangerous this job is.

We know when we get into this calling that it could take any one of us at any time.

It can take us after 30 years on the job or after 30 days.

That's why we are one big family—no matter where we really call home—because everyone here knows just how rewarding—and yet how brutal, this job is.

And even while we know the consequences nothing prepares us to cope with the grief that we feel when we lose a brother or a sister in the line of duty—let alone two.

Many of us are together for the first time today.

We will come together again this afternoon to honor Mitch Baik.

We will come together and we will be there for each other because no one in our fire service family should ever have to go through this alone.

And no family member of a fallen fire fighter should ever have to go through this alone.

But Mitch's loss and Stevie's loss will not prevent us from celebrating their lives today.

It will not prevent us from celebrating their service to their community today.

It will not prevent me from saying that my heart is broken that they are gone but we were blessed to have them in our lives.

Stevie Velasquez was both a young man and a grizzled veteran.

At just 40 years of age he already had two decades in the fire station.

He already was wise beyond his years.

For 20 years in two departments Stevie demonstrated his work ethic and set an example for others to follow.

That's why he received the Medal of Merit—the department's third-highest award—in 2000.

That's why he made lieutenant five months ago.

Bursting at the seams with enthusiasm ready to hop on a rig and respond to any call afraid of nothing, eager to experience everything, and ready to give everything he had to do The Job.

He had an efficient, studious approach.

He understood the importance of training and the importance of being prepared.

Committed, duty bound, ready to serve in the hardest, most rewarding job imaginable—that's who Stevie was.

Ready to rush to the aid of strangers, no questions asked—that's who he was.

Ready to protect his community, ready to comfort those in need, ready to lead people to safety who couldn't find their way out—that's who he was.

A devoted family man standing vigil over his newborn daughter's bedside while she gained the strength she needed to persevere—that's who he was.

He protected his community and his family—that's who "Stevie V." he was.

Like many of us he probably considered himself lucky to be a fire fighter, lucky to be able to answer the call, lucky to do something he loved.

But we were the lucky ones.

The Bridgeport Fire Department, Local 834, the IAFF—we were the lucky ones.

His brothers and sisters in Prince George's County Maryland where Stevie started his career in the fire service—they were the lucky ones.

His wife, his children, his parents, his brother and sister—you were the lucky ones.

That's what I would tell him if he were standing here today.

We had quite a gift in Lieutenant Steven Velasquez.

And that's why we feel cheated that we have to give him back to the Lord so soon.

But we will not forget him.

How could we?

A young gun . . . a rising star.

A shining example of courage, of professionalism.

Stevie's name will be etched in our Wall of Honor in Colorado Springs.

His name will remain there forever, engraved in that beautiful granite wall—to be honored every year as part of our Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial service.

To Stevie's family, we want you to know that you aren't alone.

You should know that long after the last word of the last eulogy, the IAFF and Local 834 will be here for you. Today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

To Lieutenant Steven Velasquez, who gave his life so others could live, from your 298,000 brothers and sisters in the IAFF—thank you for the gift of your life. May you rest in peace. God bless you and may God bless the fire fighters on the front lines everywhere.●

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN M. SIMPSON

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, today I thank and congratulate Kevin M. Simpson, an individual who has already enjoyed a distinguished career as a public servant and who is preparing once again to answer the call to service.

Kevin is a skilled attorney and litigator, and early in his career he made