

and to explore for resources that help improve our quality of life. Our public lands provide wide open spaces, deep forests, dramatic vistas, and opportunities for solitude that not only fulfill us individually, but form a fundamental part of the American character. Our public lands are part of who we are and the diversity of their uses, like the diversity of their landscapes, reflects our identity. In many areas, they provide timber, ore, and forage that are the economic bedrock of rural America. In other areas, Congress has designated them as wilderness, places "untrammelled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain."

Nevada boasts some of the most rugged and diverse landscapes in the United States. From the vast Black Rock Desert of northwestern Nevada, to the alpine peaks of Mount Rose overlooking the shores of Lake Tahoe, to the imposing buttes and sagebrush plains of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, and the Mojave Desert floor covered in Joshua trees and yucca plants. Over the past quarter century, home grown conservation advocates have worked to protect and preserve 68 wilderness areas consisting of 3.4 million acres, an area approximately the size of Connecticut. These advocates continue to work towards protection of the most special places in the Silver State. Currently, there are strong grassroots efforts underway to protect the high alpine lakes and thick aspen groves of the Pine Forest Range in Humboldt County as well as the rich archeological resources and spectacular red rock formations in the Gold Butte area just a short drive from Las Vegas.

Our public lands also provide a consistently reliable source of natural resources that fuel our national economy. In northern Nevada, mining is a way of life. Although Nevada was well known for silver during the 19th century, miners working in the Silver State now produce almost 80 percent of the gold in the United States, much of which comes from public lands. Nevada also has a rich history of ranching for both sheep and cattle and grazing on federal lands helps feed this family tradition. Throughout the state the burgeoning renewable energy industry on public lands has provided a variety of new job-creating economic opportunities. Harnessing the solar, wind, and geothermal resources in Nevada and throughout the country will bolster our country's economic and energy security for decades and centuries to come.

I recognize and thank the thousands of Federal employees who manage these lands year-round. The Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and other federal land management agencies ensure that public lands in Nevada and across the Nation meet the changing needs of our communities. They provide a vital, though rarely reported, service to our Nation.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the many Nevadans that will spend September 24 improving our public lands undertaking 19 projects across the State from the Big Rocks Wilderness Area in Caliente to Daggett Summit Trail in Stateline. In northern Nevada, volunteers will be working to improve our public lands at the Mill Creek Campground. These people will spend their day installing new fire rings, barbecues and lantern hooks as well as cleaning the debris from the stream and placing rocks in parking and camping areas.

The focus of National Public Lands Day this year is highlighting the opportunities public lands offer young people through the Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of the Interior. This initiative will engage youth from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with and preserving America's natural and cultural heritage. National Public Lands Day is also relaying the health benefits of outdoor recreation by encouraging families to develop more active lifestyles on our public lands.

The preservation of our public lands is a priority for me. Our public lands are part of what makes the United States a great Nation. I voice my gratitude to all who will participate in National Public Lands Day this year.

#### REMEMBERING CORPORAL LORENZA GAYLES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to honor a brave member of the U.S. Marine Corps and a fellow Kentuckian who was lost to his family and friends 45 years ago when he was killed in action in Vietnam. A very moving article in tribute to this man, CPL Lorenza Gayles, appeared in the Middlesboro Daily News recently, and I wanted to give this article and this fine young man's story the attention it deserves.

Born in Lynch, KY, on December 28, 1946, as the fourth child of David and Virginia Gayles, Lorenza moved with his family to Middlesboro as a baby and grew up with many friends. He was a good student, was popular with his schoolmates, and known for his sense of humor. His sister Lelia remembers young Lorenza was "just a charming little boy."

Lorenza, called "Rennie" by his friends, attended the Lincoln School, the only school in Middlesboro for African-American children in those days of segregation. He was a talented athlete who played football, baseball, and had an exceptional gift for basketball. Bill Smith, a longtime friend of the Gayles family, remembers Rennie as "a solid guy with a good head on his shoulders." When segregation in the area ended, Lorenza went to Middlesboro High School, where he graduated in 1964.

Knoxville College offered Rennie a scholarship to play basketball after high school, but Rennie turned them

down and chose to enlist with the Marine Corps instead. His older brother David was serving in the U.S. Air Force, and his brother Bobby was already in Vietnam with the Army. Within 2 years Rennie had risen to the rank of corporal and took his duties as a marine very seriously.

Alvin Simpson, a fellow Marine recruit who went through basic training with Rennie and later wrote a memoir about his experiences, said this: "There was no question who could outfight whom; I knew, he knew, and the entire platoon knew Lorenza was the real deal."

Corporal Lorenza Gayles was deployed to Vietnam on June 21, 1966. On September 3 of that year, while on reconnaissance patrol, he was on point with his squad when they walked into an ambush. Corporal Gayles was killed instantly. He was 19 years old.

Several weeks later his parents were presented with Corporal Gayles's posthumously awarded Purple Heart Medal. Corporal Gayles is buried in the Lynch Cemetery in Middlesboro.

"When Rennie was killed in action in Vietnam," the author of this article writes, Mr. President, "I remember my mother saying, 'that poor little Gayles boy.' This is something that I have carried with me my entire life."

That is the author of this article speaking. Forty-five years later, this author's memories still affect him, and I think anyone who reads this piece will be affected too. CPL Lorenza Gayles's life may not have been long, but he made an indelible mark on the people who love and remember him.

I ask unanimous consent that the entire article remembering CPL Lorenza Gayles, a proud marine and a brave Kentucky hero who deserves all of our respect, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Middlesboro Daily News, Sept. 2, 2011]

#### FORGOTTEN MARINE

(Editor's Note: This article was written by a Daily News reader who wishes to honor the memory of one of Middlesboro's finest—Lorenza Gayles—yet remain anonymous.)

"Once upon a time in America, when I was colored, two adventurous, young boys, both black, but from very different backgrounds; one boy was from Ky., the other boy hailed from Northern Ohio. The kid from Ky. was killed September 3, 1966, in South Vietnam. His name was Lorenza Gayles, he was twenty years old when he was killed, he was my friend. I loved him then—and I love him more today."

—From "Together We Served" By Alvin L. Simpson.

To most, Rennie Gayles is a public housing development in Middlesboro. To others, he was a son, a brother and a friend; but most importantly to me, he was Corporal Lorenza Gayles, United States Marine. Though I didn't know him, and was only five years old at the time of his death, his life and death have always held a special meaning to me.

Born in Lynch, Ky., on December 28, 1946, he was the fourth child of David and Virginia Gayles. Soon after his birth, the Gayles family moved to Middlesboro where he and his

older brothers and sister were raised in a loving home by parents that worked very hard to provide for their children. Rennie, as he was affectionately known, grew up like most of us. He had many friends, loved playing basketball, just a normal childhood growing up. He is described by his sister Lelia as "just a charming little boy."

Rennie attended school at the Lincoln School in Middlesboro, long since gone. In the days of segregation, it was the only school in Middlesboro for black children. He was a good student, very popular among his classmates and known for his sense of humor. Bill Smith, a longtime friend of the Gayles family, described Rennie as "a solid guy with a good head on his shoulders."

Rennie was also a very talented athlete who played football, baseball, and was an especially gifted basketball player. With the end of segregation, he then attended Middlesboro High School, where he graduated in 1964.

Offered a scholarship by Knoxville College to play basketball, he declined. Instead, young Gayles enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. With his older brother David serving in the U.S. Air Force, and Bobby serving in Vietnam in the U.S. Army, I suppose he felt he was obligated to enlist. He received his basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, and upon completion was stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He later transferred to a Marine base in California. He quickly rose through the ranks and became a corporal in just two years. He was an attentive soldier and took his obligation to the Corps very seriously. He was a "textbook" Marine. Tough, no-nonsense and cared deeply about those he served with.

"Everybody in our platoon knew the outstanding recruit was a black kid from Middlesboro, Ky., Lorenza Gayles," writes Alvin Simpson, author of "Distant Shore: A Memoir," and fellow Marine recruit in basic training with Rennie.

"There was no question who could outfight whom; I knew, he knew, and the entire platoon knew Lorenza was the real deal."

With the war in Vietnam escalating, Rennie was deployed on June 21, 1966. Just over two months after arriving in Vietnam, while on a reconnaissance patrol, Rennie was on point (front man in the squad) when he and the other members of his squad walked into an ambush. He was killed instantly.

#### THE WAR

With the war in Vietnam so many years behind us, many have tried to put it out of their minds. But for those who served and the family members who lost loved ones there, it haunts them every day. Deemed an unpopular war, many returning Vietnam veterans were scorned, cursed, called "baby killers," and spat upon. The truth is, no war is popular. War is, sometimes, just a necessary evil. This great nation has long carried the obligation to protect and defend those who cannot defend themselves against oppressions that exist in this world. And to the over 58,000 soldiers that died and 1,300 still listed as missing in action, we owe our eternal gratitude.

As a child growing up in the 1960s and early 1970s, the war in Vietnam to me was sitting beside my father watching the nightly news with Walter Cronkite. With the end of each broadcast came the body count, the dead, the wounded and the missing in action. Today, newscasts are filled with coverage of brave men and women memorialized who have given their lives, and those troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan as they are met at airports across the country by cheering crowds and hailed as heroes and glorified as they should be. They have dedicated their lives to protect and serve this nation as sol-

diers, and are prepared to give their lives for it.

We owe the same gratitude to those who served in Vietnam. We all know someone who served there and the memories of these heroes are fleeting. These men and women served with the same courage and dedication as do the brave soldiers of today. We see them every day. Take just a moment to thank them for their service and their sacrifice; just a pat on the back and a thank you would mean so much. Most of all, take a moment to remember, honor and mourn those who gave their lives for this great nation. Our community lost too many fine young men in Vietnam and it's up to us to pass on their heritage so that they are not forever lost to posterity. Remember that many of these men and women sacrificed their ambitions so that we wouldn't have to. They died for the very freedoms we enjoy every day.

When Rennie was killed in action in Vietnam I remember my mother saying "that poor little Gayles boy." This is something that I have carried with me my entire life. And with the passing of time and generations we owe it to them to carry on their memories. This tall, handsome, young Marine with his broad beaming smile, with his whole life ahead of him, he was one of those men.

Rennie Gayles is not just a housing project; United States Marine Corporal Lorenza Gayles was a guardian of freedom.

#### REMEMBRANCE

Forty-five years ago, on September 3, 1966, just before your twentieth birthday, in a country, half a world away from home, in the Quang Nam Province of South Vietnam defending your nation with a profound sense of duty and exemplary conduct becoming a United States Marine, you made the ultimate sacrifice. Every day of my life I will thank God for you, I will honor you, and I will remember you . . . Semper Paratus

On October 26, 1966, Corporal Lorenza Gayles was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. It was presented to his parents by Major F.C. Fisher, U.S.M.C. Corporal Gayles is buried in the Lynch Cemetery in Middlesboro.

Sincerest appreciation to those who contributed to this article: Rennie's brother, Bobby Gayles of Middlesboro; Bill Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), of Middlesboro; sister Lelia Gayles-Cammon, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Alvin L. Simpson of Columbus, Ohio, for your friendship, encouragement, service to our nation and loving tribute to your friend; and a special thanks to Sgt. Timothy Moos and the United States Marine Corps.

#### DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 10 years ago, I introduced the DREAM Act, legislation that would allow a select group of immigrant students with great potential to contribute more fully to America.

The DREAM Act would give these students a chance to earn legal status if they came to the U.S. as children, are long-term U.S. residents, have good moral character, graduate from high school, and complete 2 years of college or military service in good standing.

The DREAM Act would make America a stronger country by giving these talented immigrants the chance serve in our military and contribute to our economy.

Tens of thousands of highly-qualified, well-educated young people would en-

list in the Armed Forces if the DREAM Act becomes law.

And studies have found that DREAM Act participants would contribute literally trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy during their working lives.

These young people have overcome great obstacles to succeed. They are valedictorians, star athletes, honor-roll students, and ROTC leaders. Now they want to give back to their country. The DREAM Act would give them that chance.

For the last 10 years I have been working on the DREAM Act, there has been one constant: strong support from the faith community. The DREAM Act is supported by almost every religious group you can imagine: Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Evangelical Christians; Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews; and Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.

The faith community supports the DREAM Act because it is based on a fundamental moral principle that is shared by every religious tradition—it is wrong to punish children for the actions of their parents.

These students were brought to this country as children. They grew up here pledging allegiance to the American flag and singing the only national anthem they've ever known. They are American in their hearts and they should not be punished for their parents' decision to bring them here.

For the next several weeks, people of faith all across this country will show their support for the DREAM Act by celebrating the first-ever "DREAM Sabbath."

On the DREAM Sabbath, at churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples around the country, Americans of many religious backgrounds will offer prayers for the immigrant students who would be eligible for the DREAM Act. At many of these events, these DREAM Act students will tell their stories.

The DREAM Sabbath will take place over several weekends in September and October, and so far, there are more than 320 DREAM Sabbath events planned, in 44 States.

In June, when I announced the DREAM Sabbath, I was joined by religious leaders from a great variety of faith traditions, including: Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, a good friend who has been a leader in the fight for immigration reform for many years; Bishop Minerva Carcaño, the first Hispanic woman to be elected bishop in the Methodist Church; Reverend Samuel Rodriguez, the president of the Nation's largest Hispanic Christian organization, with more than 30,000 member churches; Reverend Derrick Harkins, the pastor of one of the most prominent African-American churches in our Nation's Capitol, who was representing the National Association of Evangelicals; Bishop Richard Graham of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Bishop David Jones of the Episcopal Church; Rabbi Lisa