

They had shoveled out the mud and muck deposited by the river, and they had torn out the mold-prone sheetrock. Yet even in disrepair, the post office was not in disarray or disorder: The Moretown Post Office continued to operate. A sign made out of a plain sheet of white paper directed customers to the side of the erstwhile post office, up a set of crooked stairs and into an office on the second floor. In that makeshift temporary post office, customers could still buy stamps, pick up their mail, and share their stories of survival and community togetherness.

The postal employees of Moretown did all this on their own time, outside of normal business hours, and on their own initiative. I understand that Ms. Tilton's manager was stranded dozens of miles to the south in Rochester, VT, a town similarly cut off from the outside world. Professionalism and dedication to the community motivated the employees of the Moretown Post Office to keep the area's postal system working. Their efforts offered a glimmer of hope to their neighbors as the community realized the extent of the devastation caused by the flood and the tremendous effort it would take to rebuild Moretown. And what a powerful testament to the currency in modern times of the proud tradition of this Nation's venerable postal system and its dedicated public servants.

The Moretown Post Office is just one story of the hundreds of stories I would like to tell to remind everyone how determined we are to recover from Tropical Storm Irene. The determination of our Moretown postal workers reminds us all of what it means to be a Vermonter and an American.

#### REMEMBERING SUVASH DARNAL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken over the years about the political transformation that has been taking place in Nepal since 2005, from a corrupt, autocratic monarchy to an emerging democracy.

That process has moved forward by fits and starts, plagued by political infighting and the seeming inability of political and ethnic factions to unite for the good of the people. We are struggling with partisanship and divisiveness in this country, so I understand the problem, but Nepal is at a historic crossroads and cannot afford for this process to fail.

Key issues that were at the heart of the internal armed conflict, such as impunity for crimes against civilians by both sides, have not been addressed. Shielding perpetrators of gross violations of human rights from punishment is incompatible with a democratic society based on the rule of law.

There are many other challenges, like reform of the army, demobilization of former Maoist combatants, improving literacy, building effective, transparent government institutions, and reducing poverty. The United States is helping, but Nepal's com-

peting political leaders must point the way forward by making the necessary compromises.

Today I want to speak briefly about caste discrimination, which is at the core of Nepal's feudalistic history. I do so by paying tribute to an extraordinary leader of Nepal's Dalit community, Suvash Darnal, who was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident in Virginia on August 15, 2011.

Mr. Darnal was only 31 years old when he died, but he had already achieved far more than most people, even people with every advantage, do in a much longer life.

Mr. Darnal was of humble beginnings, with nothing but hardship and unfairness to look forward to. Yet he managed to overcome daunting obstacles to become a respected leader with boundless energy, a quenchless thirst for knowledge, extraordinary vision, and a tireless determination to help improve the lives of his people.

As I have said before in this Chamber, Nepal's democracy cannot succeed without the inclusion of minority castes, including Dalits, in political and economic decisionmaking. Mr. Darnal devoted himself passionately to that cause through journalism, research, and advocacy.

He was an inspiring example of why caste discrimination has no place in the 21st century, and his death is a tragic loss not only for Dalits but for all of Nepal. He had the humility, integrity, intellect, and dedication to his people that Nepal needs in its leaders, and I hope others of his generation are inspired by his life and work to continue his legacy.

Mr. President I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an August 16 article in the Kathmandu Post about Mr. Darnal.

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

[From the Kathmandu Post, Aug. 16, 2011]  
 BIDUSHI DHUNGEL, "PALPALI FLAME"

The tragic death of 31-year-old Dalit activist and media entrepreneur Suvash Darnal is a huge setback to Nepal's Dalit movement. Well known for being the founder of Nepal's first ever Dalit-focused media organisation, Jagaran Media, co-founder of the Collective Campaign for Peace and most recently, the Dalit-focused think tank, Samata Foundation, Darnal made undeniable contributions to a burgeoning rights-sensitive society.

Born in Mujhung in Palpa, and one of four siblings, Suvash was schooled "by accident," at a local school that just happened to be in close proximity to his home. He was never told to go to school, nor did he initially see it as necessary, "it just kind of happened," he would say. Darnal's perseverance meant that he became the first Dalit to pass the SLC from his village. That achievement, and the positive reaction it garnered from the upper echelons of society that once treated him as untouchable, gave him the motivation to work harder.

But behind every success story, there is a long, hard struggle. Looking at Suvash in his last years, one could never guess that he'd come to Kathmandu with nothing except the fire of convictions. He spent months selling watches immersed in a bucket of water on

the Ratna Park roadside. And having made a few contacts here and there, Darnal ventured into writing for small media houses. The ideas for the foundations of the Jagaran Media Centre came in these days. It was to be the largest Dalit-led media outlet in South Asia. Even now, Jagaran media has a radio station that produces a radio magazine that is broadcast throughout India and Nepal.

These were turbulent times. By the time the media centre was established and running smoothly, King Gyanendra took over and attempted to reverse the course of history. Public outrage was growing and so was the demand for the return of democracy. At this crucial juncture, Darnal and his close friend founded the Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP). "I wanted to play my part in what I knew would be a momentous time in Nepal's history," said Darnal. He often recalled those days saying that at the heart of the uprising, it became an unofficial "secretariat" for the civil democratic movement in Nepal.

It was after this that Darnal set off to undertake the most mammoth of his life's work. He realised that democracy would be of little use to Dalit society unless there was a way to bridge the gap between politics and caste. This was where Darnal's deep frustrations with society resided. The idea that discourse at the policy level was necessary gave way to the Samata Foundation. Initially called the Nepal Center for Dalit Studies, late in 2009, the name was changed and became an officially registered organisation.

The Samata Foundation is now the hub of Dalit research. Last year, under Darnal's direction, Samata held Nepal's first ever International Dalit conference. An avid reader and fan of B.R. Ambedkar, Darnal had set out to establish caste-based policies in the country. His book, *A Land of Our Own: Conversations with Dalit Members of the Constituent Assembly*, came out in 2009. Although enthused by the 2008 elections that ushered in some 40 Dalit Constituent Assembly (CA) members, it didn't take long for Darnal to realise it wasn't going to be enough. He often said that it was only natural that the Dalit CA members wouldn't be educated, but that it was then his task to give them the information and competence to stand out and be clear about their demands. In this endeavour, he decided to publish a Nepali translation of Ambedkar's book. The translation was done by Dalit leader and CA member Aahuti, and was published earlier this year. Darnal held a special prominence in his head and heart for the personality and works of Ambedkar and the translation of the book and its subsequent publishing was a source of joy to him.

The Dalit movement has a long history in this country, but with Suvash Darnal it rose to new heights. From raising national awareness to travelling abroad for guest lectures, Darnal had the conviction to make Nepali society aware, not only of the harsh realities of caste, but of the repercussions of its perception in politics and society. Suvash's Samata Foundation was in the process of achieving precisely this. The organisation is now without its founder, and the Dalit movement without a capable leader. The work he undertook was as much professional to him as it was personal, and that's what allowed for his success. Suvash Darnal's close friends refer to him as very much of a family man. And with only a few close friends, he maintained very close ties with his family. He is survived by his wife and two year old daughter.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE FACILITIES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of H.R. 2646, as amended, the Veterans Health Care Facilities Capital Improvement Act of 2011. I urge our colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, which would allow for new construction projects in five States and Puerto Rico and would extend several VA programs, including vital homeless programs.

Last year, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, Public Law 112-10, Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, and provided an advanced appropriation of fiscal year 2012 funding for veterans' health care. Enacting H.R. 2646, as amended, would avoid interruptions in VA programs and would allow VA to use the full amount of funding provided through Public Law 112-10.

VA has worked tirelessly to get veterans off the streets and into housing. Their efforts are commendable, but there is still work to be done. H.R. 2646, as amended, contains critical extensions to many of VA's programs to end homelessness among veterans. This bill would allow VA to continue to operate the drop-in resource centers that help connect homeless veterans to services; provide grants to transitional housing programs for the most vulnerable homeless veterans, such as the frail elderly, terminally ill, women with children, and seriously mentally ill; and continue its street outreach and emergency care services for homeless veterans. These programs are on the front line of VA's services for homeless veterans.

One of the best ways to end veteran homelessness is to prevent it from happening. This bill would support VA's homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing programs by extending the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program, a critical resource for stopping homelessness before it begins. H.R. 2646, as amended, also extends the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program, which helps homeless veterans find and maintain employment. Extending these programs will decrease the number of veterans who may become homeless in these tough economic times.

VA has a long list of construction projects that have yet to be funded. H.R. 2646, as amended, would allow VA to make critical upgrades to its facilities and infrastructure to ensure that we can provide care to veterans in a safe environment. For instance, this bill would allow VA to begin a \$51 million project to seismically strengthen the nursing tower and community living center at the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System in Seattle, WA. Built in 1985, this building does not meet the current seismic code for Washington State. Located in an area of high seismic activity, it is vital that this building be upgraded so that the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System

can continue to deliver world-class healthcare to veterans in a safe environment.

We must allow VA to continue work on projects such as seismic corrections in San Juan, PR; construction of new Polytrauma and Blind Rehabilitation Centers in Palo Alto, CA; medical center improvements and cemetery expansion in St. Louis, MO; and additional parking facilities and nurse education opportunities to ongoing projects in Fayetteville, AR and Orlando, FL, respectively. Additionally, it would authorize VA to lease space for outpatient clinics in Columbus, GA; Fort Wayne, IN; Mobile, AL; Salem, OR; San Jose, CA; South Bend, IN; and Springfield, MO.

This bill helps us honor the legacy of heroic veterans by dedicating VA medical facilities in their names. With the endorsement of every member of the Texas congressional delegation, the West Texas VA Health Center in Big Spring, TX, would be renamed in honor of George H. O'Brien, a hometown hero. With similar support from the Colorado Congressional delegation, the Telehealth Clinic in Craig, CO, would be renamed in honor of MAJ William Edward Adams.

Our Nation's veterans have sacrificed much in their service to this country, we must make sure they receive the care and benefits they earned.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE DAVIDSON

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise to commend and thank Mike Davidson for his decades of extraordinarily dedicated and consequential service to our Nation, most recently as the general counsel for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence over the past 8 years.

Many others have praised the wise, discerning, and sound counsel that has characterized every step of Mike's distinguished career, from his time in the Peace Corps in Kenya in the mid-1960s throughout his decades of service since then: as a litigator for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, as a professor of clinical law at the State University of New York at Buffalo, as chief staff counsel for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, as the first legal counsel of the Senate, and, following his first retirement from the Senate in 1995, as counsel for several important public initiatives—including, most prominently, serving as general counsel for the Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001.

This exceptionally distinguished record speaks for itself, and in 2003 it led me to recruit Mike back to full-time service in the Senate. As the Intelligence Committee's vice chairman at the time, I asked Mike to serve as the committee's minority counsel, a position he held from 2003 through 2006. When I became the committee's chairman in 2007, I asked Mike to undertake

the duties of general counsel. He agreed to take on this role, and he continued to serve me and the committee well throughout the 2 years that I was chairman. After I passed on the gavel to Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN in 2009, Mike stayed on for nearly 3 more years, until his quiet retirement earlier this month.

Throughout this time on the committee, Mike's calm and unflappable presence; his evenhanded, understated, and fair approach to even the most contentious issues; his painstaking attention to detail and unflinching memory; and, above all, his dedication to the law and to the security interests of the United States, have served this committee and our Nation well. Day in and day out, we knew we could rely on Mike's counsel. Whether it was a situation involving routine oversight or a matter of great sensitivity and historical importance—of which there were many during those years, including our investigations into the intelligence regarding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, our efforts to end the CIA's coercive interrogations, our drafting and passing the landmark Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act of 2008, among others—Mike Davidson's legal acumen and advice were invariably excellent, and also indispensable to the work of the committee.

My colleagues and I trusted Mike's judgment implicitly. His example of dedicated public service and his exceptional day-to-day performance on the job earned our respect and admiration, and it inspired a generation of staff who had the privilege to work alongside him.

We will miss Mike dearly, but his legacy will remain a part of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for years to come. We wish him well in his second retirement, even as we leave the light on for him just in case he decides to serve again.

NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize September as National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in men. Approximately one in six men will be diagnosed with this disease during their lifetime and it is estimated that over 240,000 men will be diagnosed with and over 33,000 men will die from the disease this year. While no cure has been found, early detection presents our best chance at saving lives. Public awareness of prostate cancer is improving but statistics demonstrate that more can be done to make awareness and early detection of this disease a national priority.

The odds of successfully treating this disease improve with early detection, and health experts recommend that men begin receiving yearly screenings at age 50 or sooner for those men at