

this country, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and as we strive to make this a more perfect union.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I wish to speak on behalf of our service men and women suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. Tomorrow—June 27—is National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day, so designated by the U.S. Senate in a unanimous action 2 years ago. I am calling on all of my colleagues in this body to redouble our efforts to help veterans and servicemembers who are struggling with PTSD each and every day. I remain committed to provide all necessary assistance to people who have this problem as the result of their faithful military service because it is one of the solemn obligations we have as a nation. For this reason I supported Senator HEITKAMP's bi-partisan resolution designating June as National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—PTSD—Awareness Month.

With the military drawdown currently underway, I am concerned that our Nation will not adequately address the PTSD-related issues that many of our veterans and servicemembers face. I find it deeply troubling that, on average, 22 veterans commit suicide every day. Furthermore, veterans who have post-traumatic stress are at greater risk for drug abuse and alcoholism. The abuse of these substances often amounts to a form of a self-medication because the servicemember or veteran is unable or unwilling to seek help.

I strongly believe that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day is an important step in highlighting these issues. Our challenge is to help every veteran suffering from these invisible wounds seek help and cope with their very real injury. There is a perceived stigma that makes veterans reluctant to seek help and feeds negative perceptions which can cause employers not to hire veterans. Educating veterans and the public about this affliction and the support networks available will bring to light a very real and deadly epidemic among servicemembers. Too often we say “thank you” to servicemembers and veterans without really knowing what we are thanking them for, because we don't bother to understand their struggles. Addressing this disconnect would make a world of difference in helping this population mitigate the effects of post-traumatic stress.

The work being done today to address this issue proves that post-traumatic stress does not have to be a permanently disabling condition. Within my own State of Maryland, organizations such as Fort Detrick's Army Medical Research & Materiel Command are making amazing advances in developing post-traumatic stress treatments

that were unimaginable just a few years ago. As for present treatments, the Warrior Canine Connection is an excellent example of an organization that is helping veterans here and now. This organization, located in Brookeville, provides therapeutic working dogs to veterans and servicemembers, and it also conducts research that strives to further improve upon the positive effects that these service animals have on the veterans and servicemembers. The Warrior Canine Connection has helped countless veterans relieve the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, enabling them to regain their status as healthy and productive members of our society.

I am not at all surprised that these servicemembers and veterans have bounced back wonderfully after being treated for their post-traumatic stress. If a soldier, sailor, airmen or Marine is able to excel on the battlefield, then I see no reason why that same person should not be able to excel in the classroom, in a hospital, or in the boardroom. I refuse to believe that our veterans and servicemembers are “damaged goods” because of their military service.

One only needs to look at our history to see that our society benefits greatly when we provide our veterans and servicemembers with the assistance they need to transition successfully to civilian life. During World War II, American servicemembers encountered some of the most difficult combat conditions in human history. Yet when World War II veterans returned home, did they become a burden to their nation because of those combat experiences? Not at all. Returning World War II veterans spearheaded the work that made our country more prosperous than it had ever been. Veterans can be the engine to a great economy that sustains a flourishing middle class. I believe World War II veterans were able to succeed in the civilian workforce because after the war, they returned to a society that understood and genuinely respected their military service.

This week I had the privilege of visiting the Veterans Health Care System in Baltimore, MD. America cannot break our promise to those who have sacrificed so much to protect our great Nation. We have seen bipartisan progress toward correcting the systemic problems facing our veterans' health care system, and I am encouraged by the additional staff and resources being deployed in Baltimore. Most Maryland veterans are receiving quality health care at world-class facilities close to home. But the wounds inflicted by this national breach of trust will take more time to heal as we renew and fulfill our commitment to care for the health and well-being of our veterans.

I am continually in awe of the extraordinary men and women serving at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center who make it their daily mission to provide the highest level of

support to our wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers and their families. A testament to their commitment is the Department of Defense Deployment Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, MD, which has developed an intensive, 3-week, multi-disciplinary treatment program called The Specialized Care Program. This program is designed for servicemembers experiencing PTSD or experiencing difficulties readjusting to life upon redeployment after serving in Operations IRAQ or ENDURING FREEDOM. This program is for patients who have had other treatments for PTSD, or perhaps depression, but who continue to experience symptoms that interfere with their ability to function.

In light of the upcoming July 4 holiday, providing assistance to veterans who have served our Nation so diligently must be a priority. As we celebrate our Independence Day, we must also address the needs of those who have defended our liberty and have allowed it to thrive. Without the men and women who fought for the United States' freedom in 1776 and those who bravely do so today, our country simply would not exist. With this in mind, we as Americans ought to support our veterans to the best of our abilities and present them with the necessary assistance and resources they may require. Whether we succeed in this endeavor will be a significant measure of our Nation's fidelity towards our veterans and its moral character. I am committed to making sure this population receives treatment for post-traumatic stress, should they need it. The United States is the strongest nation in the world because of our veterans and servicemembers. We owe it to bring them back home not just in body, but in mind and spirit, as well.

RWANDA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, rising from the ashes of the 1994 genocide, the Rwandan people can be proud of the progress their country has made over the past two decades. Through reconciliation and resilience, Rwanda has entered a new phase of economic growth and is working to protect civilians in other countries through its vital contributions to global peacekeeping missions. The world has cheered these successes, but today we have cause for concern.

To cement its legacy as a world leader and model for development, there is in Rwanda today a clear need to ensure space for a thriving civil society—a hallmark of any democracy. I am deeply troubled by reports of shrinking space for dissenting voices. Rwanda's domestic human rights movement has been profoundly constrained by a combination of intimidation and stigmatization, threats, harassment, arbitrary arrests and detentions, infiltration, and administrative obstacles. The government's actions to censor domestic and international human rights

groups appear to be part of a broader pattern of intolerance of criticism.

In 2013, the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Nations Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, and Freedom House all expressed concern over the interference of the Rwandan Government in determining the leadership of the Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, one of the last remaining independent advocacy organizations in the country. This has effectively curtailed domestic civil society initiatives to monitor human rights abuses.

In June of this year, the U.S. State Department cited its deep concern over the arrest and disappearance of dozens of Rwandan citizens over a period of 2 months, citing incommunicado detention and a lack of due process, as well as the threatening of journalists.

Also in June, Human Rights Watch, HRW, an organization that has worked on Rwanda for more than 20 years and documented the 1994 genocide, was accused by the Ministry of Justice of political bias and collaboration with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, FDLR, some of whose members participated in the genocide and committed horrific human rights abuses in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC. These accusations come in the wake of a May HRW critique of the Rwandan Government's actions, including forced disappearances, and discount HRW's constant critique of the FDLR's egregious human rights record in the DRC. HRW, the last independent international organization based in Kigali speaking out against human rights abuses, appears at increasing risk of not being able to do its job, and perhaps even of being shut down.

Rwanda's past should not be used as an excuse to suppress free speech and independent reporting in Rwanda today. Dissent is an important tool for citizens in holding their elected leaders accountable. Peaceful, law-abiding individuals and organizations should not be labeled as conspirators or enemies of state because they question the government. Freedom of expression and due process are rights that should extend to all Rwandans and its visitors—including journalists, human rights advocates, opposition members, and everyday citizens alike.

Rwanda has made great strides, but there is still work to do. As Rwanda faces its newest challenges, the United States stands with its people and remains committed to their success.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST DYLAN J. JOHNSON

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I wish to remember the life and sacrifice of a remarkable young man, Army SPC Dylan J. Johnson. Dylan died 3 years ago today, June 26, 2011, of injuries suffered from an improvised explosive device in Diyala Province, Iraq, in support of Operation New Dawn.

Dylan was born November 07, 1990, in Tulsa, OK. His father Jeff Johnson said Dylan "had aspired to military service for years and dressed as a soldier for Halloween six years running." After Dylan graduated from Jenks High School, he joined the military in August 2009, largely inspired by the men on both sides of his family who served with the military during World War II and Korea.

After completing basic training at Fort Knox, KY, Dylan was assigned to the 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division in Fort Hood, TX.

Specialist Johnson departed on Memorial Day 2011 for his first overseas deployment and arrived in Iraq June 2. On June 26, 2011, Dylan tragically died of injuries he sustained when insurgents attacked his armored vehicle with an improvised explosive device. One other soldier in the vehicle was killed alongside of Dylan.

"Dylan possessed a kind spirit and was a bit reserved in my world literature class," said teacher, Ron Acebo. "We all ache for the loss of this young life and grieve with his family. As teachers, we all hold hopes and dreams for our students. We do not know what he could have achieved but we are humbled that he had made the supreme sacrifice for his country. . . . and that is how he will be remembered."

A memorial service was held July 6, 2011, at Kirk of the Hills Church in Tulsa, OK and he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on August 9, 2011.

At a ceremony on his birthday in 2013, the State of Oklahoma dedicated to his memory the bridge on U.S. 75 across Polecat Creek, just south of Main Street in Jenks, OK. A sign reading "Specialist Dylan Johnson Memorial Bridge" was emplaced on the structure, and his father asked those gathered to remember Oklahoma's other fallen soldiers when they cross it.

Dylan's military honors include the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Iraqi Campaign Medal with Combat Service Star.

In addition to his father, Dylan is survived by his mother Joy Sehl; his stepmother Lynda Johnson; two sisters, Alexandra Johnson and Kathryn Sehl; and two stepsisters, Brittany Dinan and Brooke Dinan. All are of Tulsa, OK.

Today we remember Army SPC Dylan J. Johnson, a young man who loved his family and country and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST JORDAN M. MORRIS

Madam President, I now wish to remember the life and sacrifice of a remarkable young man, Army SPC Jordan M. Morris. Along with 4 other soldiers, Jordan died August 11, 2011 of injuries he sustained from an improvised explosive device in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Jordan was born in Elk City, OK on February 12, 1988, and later moved to Ripley, OK. While attending Ripley High School, he was a member of the baseball team, National Honor Society, 4-H, and served as Student Council president. He was concurrently enrolled and graduated from the Oklahoma School of Science and Math. As an active member of the Hillcrest Baptist Church, he was very involved with the youth group and enjoyed spending time serving others on various mission trips.

After graduating as class valedictorian from Ripley High School in 2006, he fulfilled a dream he had from the age of 8 as he was accepted to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Jordan spent 4 years at West Point, majoring in mechanical engineering. Friend Caleb Eytcheson said Jordan "wanted to be the best, and he knew West Point is where they trained the best. He wanted to serve his country," he said.

Jordan joined the Army in January 2011, serving as an infantryman. After completing training at Fort Benning, GA he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY. On May 5, 2011, Jordan deployed to Afghanistan.

Doug Scott, assistant principal of Ripley High School said Morris was intelligent, had a great sense of humor and was very popular in school. "He showed his unselfish side by going overseas," Scott said.

Jordan's baseball coach, Donnie Hoffman said: "The world is not as good a place, when you lose people with the character that he was. The legacy he leaves behind was the way he led his life, the character, the discipline, the dedication, the honor."

Jordan was buried August 20, 2011 at Palmer Marler Funeral Home in Stillwater, OK.

Jordan is survived by his parents Brett and Nita (Faber) Morris of Stillwater; two brothers Levi James and Jesse Isaac Morris of Stillwater; grandparents Wilma Faber, of Tulsa, James and Patricia Morris, of Broken Arrow; numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends, as well as his former West Point classmates and fellow soldiers in the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Today we remember Army SPC Jordan M. Morris, a young man who loved his family and country, and gave his life as a sacrifice for freedom.

SPECIALIST JOSHUA M. SEALS

Madam President, I also wish to remember the life and sacrifice of a remarkable young man, Army SPC Joshua M. Seals. Specialist Seals died August 16, 2011 of non-combat injuries at Forward Operating Base Lightening in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma National Guard.