

girls with developmental disabilities. Her program works in conjunction with the Moore Center, an agency serving the disabled, to provide training for dance instructors who will teach the children at the center. One hour each week, from November to June, Szopa and five other instructors teach basic dance to five students.

School honorees are judged by State selection committees, which name the top middle-level and high school volunteer in each State. These State-level honorees receive a silver medallion, \$1,000 and a trip to Washington, DC with a parent or guardian, for several days of national recognition events in May. Also, in May, America's top 10 youth volunteers for 1998 are chosen from the State-level honorees by a blue-ribbon national selection panel. These 10 national honorees will be announced at a special ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, where they each will receive an additional \$5,000, a gold medallion and a crystal trophy for his or her school.

Meagan and Alia have made significant contributions to their communities and to the State of New Hampshire. Not only have they served their community selflessly, but they have also served as inspirational role models to other students. Volunteerism strengthens community life as well as enhances the lives of people. I applaud Meagan and Alia's dedication and innovation in creating programs to serve the needs of citizens in their community. Without these young leaders, our country would be lost. It takes a special person to make a difference in someone's life. Meagan and Alia are indeed special and treasures to their school, the State of New Hampshire and to our country. ●

THE VETERANS' CEMETERY PROTECTION ACT OF 1997

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, next week, November 11, our Nation will observe Veterans Day. Commemorative services will be held throughout the Nation on that day. I expect services will be held at Arlington Cemetery and other national cemeteries, where thousands of war dead are buried.

As I mentioned in a statement last May, prior to Memorial Day, Mr. President, not all activities at our national cemeteries have honored our Nation's veterans. There have been, unfortunately, instances of vandalism and theft at our national cemeteries. While many of these incidents are minor, many attacks on national cemeteries are serious. The Department of Justice reports that between January 1, 1995, and May 31, 1997, there were 21 reports of vandalism or crime at national cemeteries, where the estimated damage was over \$1,000. The total loss to our national cemeteries from these incidents is more than \$98,000. In addition, more than 56 incidents were reported, with damage less than \$1,000, during that same time period. These

incidents caused another \$15,000 in losses to the Government.

The harm resulting from attacks on our national cemeteries, however, is more than economic loss. Such criminal activity is an assault on the honor of our veterans, particularly those who made the supreme sacrifice in defense of our Nation. It is an attack on the heritage and values for which our veterans fought. Such conduct is unconscionable and deserves a strong response.

The time has come to demand a stop to this type of insulting behavior and punish it when it occurs. That is why I introduced S. 813, the Veterans' Cemetery Protection Act of 1997. This bill imposes criminal penalties for vandalism and theft at national cemeteries operated by the VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Interior.

Specifically, this bill authorizes the U.S. Sentencing Commission to review and amend the Federal sentencing guidelines to provide an appropriate sentencing enhancement for any offense against the property of a national cemetery.

I am delighted that Senators MCCAIN, INHOFE, INOUE, D'AMATO, and SESSIONS have joined as cosponsors. I thank all Senators for their support on final passage. I particularly appreciate the support from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Department of Justice, and the U.S. Sentencing Commission. I look forward to passage of this measure by the other body, so this bill can be on the President's desk by Veterans Day.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to speak for 12 minutes.

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

THE PERFORMANCE OF TREASURY IG VALERIE LAU

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to inform my colleagues about an instance of failed leadership in protecting the taxpayers' money, and in executing the law enforcement functions of our Government. It's a story full of irony, of abuse of power, of a breakdown in the people's trust.

Last Friday, and again today, hearings were held by the Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The chairman of that subcommittee is Senator SUSAN COLLINS of Maine. The subject was the performance and conduct of the Treasury Department's inspector general, Valerie Lau, and her staff.

During Friday's hearing, we learned that Ms. Lau personally let two illegal contracts, including one to a long time associate, Mr. Frank Sato. IG Lau violated procurement laws and regulations in the sole-source procurement of the two consulting contracts. The judgment that these two contracts were illegal was not made by members of the

subcommittee. It was made by the independent, nonpartisan General Accounting Office.

The GAO also found that IG Lau violated the standards of ethical conduct. This is because she failed to disclose her personal and professional relationship with Mr. Sato.

Today, at the subcommittee's second hearing, we heard more. We learned that IG Lau and her staff provided false and/or inaccurate testimony to Congress and congressional investigators. We learned of the destruction of a document. The document was destroyed, in my view, as part of a cover-up. It was to hide the fact that a potentially criminal investigation had been launched—without merit—of two agents of the U.S. Secret Service. It was in retaliation for their testimony before Congress in the FBI Filegate matter. Again, that is my own judgment.

The IG and her staff, as well as other Treasury officials, had told my staff as well as officials of the Secret Service that a potentially criminal case had been opened. Then, the IG and her staff denied having told us that, and maintained that such a case was never opened. The record now shows that those statements were false: There was, in fact, such an investigation of the two agents.

Also today, we learned that the IG presides over an agency that has become totally demoralized. It's clearly because of failed leadership at the top. Wrongful and questionable activity can be assigned to virtually the entire upper level of the IG's office. The troops below are suffering from bad morale. The office of the Treasury IG has been severely crippled.

The irony in all this is that an inspector general's job is to detect these very violations in others. An IG is not supposed to commit them.

One of the illegal contracts that the IG let, grew from \$85,000 to \$345,000. That's called contract nourishment. There's not much to show for it. Except 1,000 rulers, Mr. President. The rulers are 6 inches in length. They're made of flexible plastic. They have the inspector general's mission, vision, and values statement printed on them to remind employees of who they are and what they do.

Mr. President, I take the amount of rulers purchased—1,000—and divide that into the cost of the contract—\$345,000—and I come up with a value per ruler of \$345.

That's right, Mr. President. The \$345 ruler.

Mr. President, this is not the first time in my experience that the Government bought ordinary products at extraordinary prices. I recall coming to this floor in 1983. I had with me a small steel washer that was a spare part for an Air Force airplane. The price of that washer was \$364. It was worth only about a quarter.

The Pentagon, at the time, defended the cost of the washer. First of all, it