

RECOGNIZING MR. LUTHER'S 3RD GRADE CLASS AT BEACHWOOD ELEMENTARY

• Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a truly outstanding feat by a 3rd grade class in Fort Lewis, Washington. Mr. Chris Luther's 3rd grade class at Beachwood Elementary School has not missed a spelling word on their weekly spelling tests for 25 weeks. Nearly a month ago, as my colleagues may remember, I announced an "Innovation in Education Award" program to recognize the important role individuals and communities play in the education of America's students. This class and their teacher, Mr. Luther, are perfect examples of this principle in action.

This is a classroom of average kids, all with different backgrounds and abilities. Yet, Mr. Luther has found a way to encourage and tutor these students so they are all accomplishing equally praiseworthy work. The key has not been some magical formula rather, the success of these students comes from a concerted effort by Mr. Luther to boost their self-esteem, to enhance their memory skills, and to impress upon every child in the classroom that learning is important. Those strategies combined with the individual effort of each of his students has clearly paid off.

Mr. Luther's creativity to engage his students in learning extends far beyond spelling. Each year, he produces a "Math Relay" that involves some 2000 students from 88 local schools. This remarkable gathering combines physical activity and competition with math questions and answers. Not only does the size of the event speak highly of its success but, the fact that Mr. Luther handles the mind-boggling logistics of an event this size himself is further cause for recognizing this fine educator.

I applaud Mr. Luther's initiative, creativity and ability to encourage his students to succeed. It is the work of educators like Mr. Luther and the efforts of students like those in Mr. Luther's 3rd grade class who are making education work across America. That is why it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Luther and his third grade class for their accomplishments and it is why I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting local educators.●

THE TALIBAN'S ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, yesterday, Senator BROWNBACK and I introduced a resolution, S. Res. 68, condemning the treatment of Afghan women and girls by the Taliban. I hope my colleagues will join us in condemning the systematic human rights violations that are being committed against women and girls in that war-torn nation.

The Taliban militia seized control of most of Afghanistan in 1996 and now

control about 90 percent of the country, including the capital, Kabul. This group imposes an extreme interpretation of Islam practiced no where else in the world on all individuals. It is especially repressive on women.

Before the Taliban assumed control of much of Afghanistan, women were highly involved in public life. They held positions in the government and worked as doctors, lawyers, nurses, and teachers. The picture could not be more different today. Today, under Taliban rule women in Afghanistan are denied even the most basic human rights: they cannot work outside the home, attend school, or even wear shoes that make noise when they walk. They must wear a head-to-toe covering called a burqa, which allows only a tiny opening to see and breathe through. Parents cannot teach their daughters to read, or take their little girls to be treated by male doctors. Mr. President, women have been stoned to death, beaten, and otherwise abused for "breaking" these harsh laws.

The Physicians for Human Rights recently conducted a study of 160 women in Afghanistan and their findings are horrific. One of those women, a 20 year-old woman interviewed in Kabul had the following story:

Eight months ago, my two-and-a-half year old daughter died from diarrhea. She was refused treatment by the first hospital that we took her to. The second hospital mistreated her [they refused to provide intravenous fluids and antibiotics because of their Hazara ethnicity, according to the respondent]. Her body was handed to me and her father in the middle of the night. With her body in my arms, we left the hospital. It was curfew time and we had a long way to get home. We had to spend the night inside a destroyed house among the rubble. In the morning we took my dead baby home but we had no money for her funeral.

The study found that 77 percent of women had poor access to health care in Kabul, while another 20 percent reported no access at all. Of those surveyed, 71 percent reported a decline in their physical condition over the last two years. In addition, there was also a significant decline in the mental health of the women surveyed. Of the participants, 81 percent reported a decline in their mental condition; 97 percent met the diagnostic criteria for depression; 86 percent showed symptoms of anxiety; 42 percent met the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; and 21 percent reported having suicidal thoughts "extremely often" or "quite often." In addition, 53 percent of women described occasions in which they were seriously ill and unable to seek medical care. 28 percent of the Afghan women reported inadequate control over their own reproduction.

S. Res. 68 calls on the President of the United States to prevent a Taliban-led government of Afghanistan from taking a seat in the United Nations General Assembly, so long as these gross violations of human rights persist.

Our resolution also urges the Administration not to recognize any govern-

ment in Afghanistan which does not take actions to achieve the following goals: effective participation of women in all civil, economic, and social life; the right of women to work; the right of women and girls to an education without discrimination and the reopening of schools to women and girls at all levels of education; the freedom of movement of women and girls; equal access of women and girls to health care; equal access of women and girls to humanitarian aid.

Mr. President, I am shocked that women and girls in Afghanistan are suffering under these conditions as we approach the 21st Century. The United States has an obligation to take the lead in condemning these abuses.

I want to thank Senator BROWNBACK for joining me in introducing this legislation. He has been a strong voice for human rights and I know that he shares my passion for seeing an end to these abuses in Afghanistan.●

RESOLUTION TO COMMEND SENATOR J. ROBERT KERREY

• Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senators DASCHLE and EDWARDS and the other cosponsors of this resolution commending our friend and colleague BOB KERREY on the 30th anniversary of the events giving rise to his receiving the Medal of Honor.

During my tenure as Secretary of the Navy, I had the honor and privilege of working with a great many brave men and women—citizens of all stripes who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to serve their country. One especially courageous naval officer was Lieutenant (j.g.) JOSEPH ROBERT KERREY.

Thirty years ago last Sunday in Vietnam, BOB KERREY lead a SEAL team mission aimed at capturing certain Viet Cong leaders. While leading this dangerous mission, he was badly wounded as a grenade exploded at his feet. Despite suffering massive injuries from this explosion and being in a state of near-unconsciousness, Lieutenant KERREY did not give up. He continued to lead his men, ordering them to secure and defend an extraction site.

For his heroism in combat, Lieutenant KERREY was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. And just what is this award? It is the highest award for valor in action that can be bestowed upon a member of the armed forces.

The Medal of Honor was created in the days of the Civil War through legislation sponsored by Senator James Grimes, chairman of the Senate Naval Committee, with the support of Navy Secretary Gideon Wells and President Abraham Lincoln. At that time, although serving in the military was required of all men, it had become clear that some servicemembers went "above and beyond the call of duty."

So, the first two hundred medals were presented to those who distinguished themselves in the Civil War by their gallantry in action and other