

Today, as it should be, military service is being held in high esteem. The events of September 11 have renewed America's sense of gratitude toward the men and women of the Armed Forces for the great sacrifices they make everyday on behalf of our Nation. America has been steadfast in its commitment to the world to be a beacon for freedom. Our military personnel have honored our commitment to the world, time after time, in every part of the globe.

At present, the members of our Armed Forces are fighting the terrorist regime responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans on September 11th. We will win this fight. And once again, our men and women in uniform will honor our commitment to the world. What strikes me with enormous poignancy is the age of those who have answered the call to duty throughout our history. In this war, as in those of our past, we send our young to honor our commitments abroad and to protect our great Nation. They are the best of the best. Their motto might well be, in the words of Alexander Pope, "Act well your part, therein all honor lies."

As we observe Veterans Day, let us remember that we owe our veterans our gratitude and appreciation year round, and not merely on the day set aside for the commemoration of their service and sacrifice. It would be truly disgraceful if veterans were made to feel forgotten except for this one day per year. Indeed, our gratitude should be as steadfast as the great monuments that Americans have built in commemoration of the very service and sacrifices our veterans made. There should be no ambivalence in our attitude toward those who serve in the United States Armed Forces.

I am proud to represent the State of West Virginia in the Senate. West Virginia has one of the highest veteran populations per capita of any State. The deep patriotism and loyalty to our country of the people of my State of West Virginia fills me with gratitude, and inspires me in my role as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In that position, I am fortunate to represent not only the veterans of West Virginia, but veterans all over our country.

As Chairman, I have fought very hard for improvements in benefits and services to veterans. We have made significant strides this year in fulfilling the pledge of Abraham Lincoln, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans."

A critical need for veterans is long-term care. Our veteran population is aging rapidly and it is our responsibility to care for them. I am dedicated to this need, and in groundbreaking legislation, I was able to secure a significant expansion in the eligibility for and types of treatment that will soon be available to veterans.

It is my belief that the Montgomery GI Bill must be sufficient to recognize

the commitment and sacrifices that individuals make to serve in the military. In keeping with that belief, the Committee has endorsed legislation under which the basic rate of the MGIB benefit will be raised over the next 3 years. In addition, accelerated payments of MGIB benefits will be authorized to accommodate the compressed schedule of courses that leads to employment in a high technology industry. We should make every effort to accommodate the educational needs of our veterans, and this change is an important step in doing so.

Additionally, the Committee endorsed legislation under which the maximum amount for the popular VA home loan guaranty will be increased. It will now be within the reach of veterans to buy homes in major metropolitan areas where home prices have skyrocketed. Many years have passed since a VA home loan guaranty increase, and high housing costs in certain areas had put homeownership beyond the reach of our veterans who live in those areas. This increase will add value to the existing benefit.

Today, and everyday, we should honor those who have worn the uniforms of our Nation. All those who served deserve our appreciation, our respect, and our compassion. They are indeed, the best of the best.●

#### TRIBUTE TO JESSICA CATANESE

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire, Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Jessica Catanese, of Groton, MA for being honored as the 2001 recipient of the Veteran's Affairs Hands and Heart Award. The award is an annual recognition given to one employee in each VA medical facility whose "sustained, compassionate, direct patient care is exceptional."

Jessica is a recreation therapist for the Manchester VA Medical Center Nursing Home who provides emotional support, help and guidance to patients above and beyond the call of duty. I comment Jessica for the caring and professional expertise she provides to VA hospital patients.

Staff and volunteers from the Manchester VA facility were included in the nomination process and all agreed that Jessica is an outstanding asset to the nursing home who consistently demonstrates courteous, friendly, and respectful care for the patients.

Jessica has served the veterans of the Manchester VA Medical Center Nursing Home with dedication and concern. As a veteran of the Vietnam war and senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I applaud her achievements and professionalism. The citizens of New Hampshire own Jessica a debt of thanks for her exemplary services.

I wish Jessica continued success in her professional endeavors at the Manchester VA Medical Center Nursing Home. It is truly an honor and a privilege to represent her in the United States.●

MISSOURI STATE SENATOR PAULA CARTER

● Mrs. CARNAHAN. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the memory of a fearless leader and influential figure in Missouri politics, State Senator Paula J. Carter.

A native of Saint Louis, Senator Carter got involved in politics in the '60s. Her rise from Democratic precinct worker to an influential figure in the Missouri General Assembly clearly demonstrates the fact that one person can make a tremendous difference in the lives of all.

During her tenure in the Missouri House and Senate, she was a fierce defender and protector of peoples' rights. To her it never mattered who her foes were. At a time when many accepted inequity and injustice as the way it always was, she saw them as challenges to be overcome. When other politicians asked, "Can we win?" Senator Carter asked "Should we fight?" More often than not, the answer was a rousing "Yes!" Her efforts on behalf of women and minorities will never be forgotten.

In addition to her legislative and civic successes, Senator Carter was proud of her role as a mother and grandmother. Wardell, Gregory, Keena, and Willie Christopher will attempt to carry on their mother's tradition, each in their own way, as will, also, her seven grandchildren.

Though there are still causes to champion and battle to fight, this tireless advocate has been called to rest. May we all find inspiration in her deeds and renew our commitment to public service, a calling worthy of our lives.●

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred September 6, 1996 in Washington, D.C. The assailant, Michael J. Monts, 29, was charged with simple assault and assault with a deadly weapon for allegedly attacking a gay man in July 1996. Monts was ultimately convicted of assault with a deadly weapon in connection to that crime.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.●