

pernicious stereotype that Romani culture is somehow incompatible with education. This fiction continues to be widely held and disseminated by the media, by government officials and public leaders, and sometimes even by the representatives of respected international organizations. Frankly, this myth needs to be debunked.

In reality, before World War II, there was no country in Europe that allowed Roma to attend school and maintain their language and cultural identity at the same time. Formal schooling, by definition, meant forced assimilation. It is amazing testimony to the strength of Romani culture that—after centuries as a dispersed people in Europe, after slavery in Romania and Moldova, after forced assimilation campaigns, and after the Holocaust—Romani identity has survived.

For most Roma in Europe, concentrated in countries that fell behind the Iron Curtain, it is only the context of a post-communist world, a Europe which has now recognized the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities, that the theoretical opportunity to be educated without having to hide or surrender one's Romani identity is within grasp. Kids like Elvis Hajdar, the Romani-Macedonian computer whiz-kid the Christian Science Monitor profiled in April, embrace this opportunity.

For many other Roma, however, educational opportunities remain only distant and only theoretical. And, contrary to popular mythology, it is not Romani culture that holds them back, but crushing poverty and entrenched racism.

Education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and it is no surprise that Romani organizations across Europe have made access to education one of their principle demands. Moreover, the "Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area," adopted at the Maastricht Ministerial last December, the OSCE participating states outlined a variety of concrete measures states might undertake to achieve this goal. But desegregation will not just happen on its own. It will take leadership and political will—as we know from our own experiences after the Brown decision—it may still take many years. The time to get started is now.

#### OREGON'S DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, last week, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled to uphold the Oregon Death with Dignity Act. This ruling is the latest rebuff to U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft's efforts to overturn Oregon law. The ruling makes clear that contrary to Attorney General Ashcroft's viewpoint, the Controlled Substance Act does not override the constitutional right of a state to regulate medical practice, including the choice of the citizenry to deter-

mine whether they want to allow physicians to aid terminally ill patients.

Oregon voters first approved a physician-assisted suicide ballot measure in 1994, but the Oregon legislature did not agree with their decision and put the matter on the ballot a second time. In 1997, Oregon voters overwhelmingly voted once more to allow physician-assisted suicide.

Almost immediately, however, federal politicians 3,000 miles away began efforts to deny Oregon citizens their long recognized right to choose their own course. Over the course of several Congresses, the attempts to overturn Oregon law and the wishes of Oregon voters through general legislation also failed.

Having failed in Congress, I predicted in December 2000, that President Bush would instruct his Attorney General to reinterpret federal law in an effort to invalidate the will of Oregon's voters. The recent ruling by the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to preserve the Oregon vote is the second setback to the Attorney General's attempts to reinterpret federal law.

Since I was first elected to the United States Senate, I have not wavered in my defense of the choice of the citizens of Oregon. If others see this ruling as an invitation once again to attempt to overturn Oregon law through federal legislation, I will be there again to stand up for my state. Therefore, I want to notify my colleagues that I will be reviewing every piece of legislation that may come before the Senate and will not grant my consent to consider any measure or matter that contains provisions that would overturn the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.

#### 50TH EDITION OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to bring to the attention of my colleagues a special event taking place next month, when the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA, headquartered in Quincy, MA, will publish the 50th edition of the National Electrical Code.

First published in 1897, the code provides a blueprint for safeguarding schools, hospitals, homes, and workplaces from the potential dangers of electricity. The code is recognized throughout the United States and is used extensively in other nations. In many respects, it is the most widely accepted building construction code in the world. According to Bob Vila, the well-known home improvement personality, the code "... not only promotes best practices, it is also a nearly universal document which helps everyone in the business achieve the safest possible results."

The wide acceptance of the code as a public safety document is a tribute to the success of the National Fire Protection Association's voluntary consensus process, which is used by the As-

sociation to develop many other safety codes and standards as well. The process is accredited by the American National Standards Institute and is the same voluntary consensus process mandated for Federal agencies by Congress in the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995.

The National Electrical Code is currently updated every 3 years and is the result of thousands of hours of work by more than 450 representatives of the enforcement community, the construction industry, organized labor, the manufacturing sector, suppliers, and the insurance industry. Before a new edition of the code is published, members of the public are invited to provide input. Upon completion of that process, the document is then voted on for adoption by the entire membership of the Association. By continually updating the code to address new emerging technologies and construction methods, the association has enabled Americans to enjoy an unparalleled level of safety against electrical hazards.

I congratulate the association and the many volunteers who have spent so many hours to make the 50th edition of the National Electrical Code a reality. They deserve the Nation's gratitude for their skill and dedication in providing this extraordinary public service.

#### BIRTH OF ELIZABETH MERRELL LUGAR

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, during this past recess of the Senate, my wife Charlene and I received the joyous news that Elizabeth Merrell Lugar, the newborn daughter and first child of our son, David Riley Lugar, and his wife, Katherine Graham Lugar, had been born on May 25, 2004, at Sibley Memorial Hospital, Washington, DC. Elizabeth was a healthy 7 pounds, 2 ounces at birth. Lawrence Graham and Jane Graham, Charlene, and I greeted our new granddaughter and her parents at a family dinner in their McLean, VA, residence on May 31.

Katherine and David were married on June 3, 2000, in St. David's Episcopal Church, Austin, TX. Katherine, a graduate of the University of Texas, is vice president of government affairs of the National Retail Federation. David Lugar came with us to Washington, along with his three brothers, 27 years ago. He graduated from Langley High School, McLean, VA, and Indiana University and is a partner of Quinn Gillespie & Associates. Both Katherine and David are well known to many of our colleagues and their staff members.

We know that you will understand our excitement and our joy that they and we have been given this divine blessing and responsibility for a glorious new chapter in our lives.