

child victims. Shasta and Dylan's father said:

There's been so many times I've seen the news announce sex offenders being released into the community. People need to contact their Congressmen, their Senators, and even the President. There's a lot more that can be done.

I would like to tell Mr. Groene that we are listening. We hear your plea and the pleas of so many other Americans who want to see these monsters dealt with.

We are going to act. We will act. We must protect America's children, families, and neighborhoods from these sick predators. Our children are depending on us to keep them safe from the evils that lurk in the shadows.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of the Peace Corps.

This year marks the 45th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. Over the last 45 years, the Peace Corps has been one of the enduring symbols of America abroad. The Peace Corps has helped create opportunities and hope for people throughout the developing world as it has projected a positive image of America.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship. Since then, over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 138 countries. These volunteers have provided extensive assistance and expertise in agriculture production, business development, education, healthcare, and resource conservation—making significant improvements in the lives of individuals and communities around the world.

As we continue to face the challenges of the 21st Century, the mission of the Peace Corps is more vital than ever. Volunteers continue to offer support and development assistance to countries around the world. They are finding common ways to address global challenges such as endemic poverty and HIV/AIDS.

Today, Peace Corps volunteers, including 50 from my State of Nebraska,

bring their communities an enhanced understanding of foreign cultures and traditions, building bridges of friendship between people that transcend borders, language, and religion.

I congratulate the Peace Corps on its 45 years of achievement and accomplishment and thank the over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers—including our Senate colleague CHRIS DODD for their good work and important contributions to making a better world.

Thank you.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Peace Corps on its 45th Anniversary.

In his Presidential campaign in 1960, a great hero of mine, President John F. Kennedy, challenged a group of students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by volunteering their time and energies to citizens in developing countries. From those humble beginnings soon emerged the Peace Corps which, for the last 45 years, has been one of the most valuable and unique institutions of American foreign policy.

Since its establishment in 1961, over 182,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 138 countries throughout the world. Today, the Peace Corps remains as strong and popular as ever with the number of volunteers in service at a 30-year high. Currently some 7,810 volunteers, including 25 from my home State of Delaware, are working in 75 countries across the globe.

These increased numbers of volunteers have done invaluable work in recent years. Hundreds of Peace Corps volunteers, for instance, have been enlisted in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The Peace Corps is active in 9 of the 15 Emergency Plan countries identified in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR. In addition, volunteers have continued lending their expertise to traditional areas such as environmental conservation, education, food production, and health care.

Over the past year, the innovative Crisis Corps—which draws on former Peace Corps volunteers for short-term emergency and humanitarian assistance—has allowed hundreds of volunteers to assist in tsunami relief efforts in Sri Lanka and Thailand. And in recent months, the Crisis Corps was deployed to the gulf region in the wake of Hurricane Katrina—the first time Peace Corps volunteers have ever been called to serve on U.S. soil.

Through the goodwill and service of its volunteers, the Peace Corps also plays a vital role in our public diplomacy efforts. Volunteers give a human face to the term "American," bringing personal knowledge of our ideals and attitudes to communities all over the world. In doing so, they help to erode the deep misconceptions of the United States that exist in many cultures. Peace Corps volunteers are truly a top-

notch example of diplomacy through action.

Again, I congratulate the Peace Corps on its 45th anniversary, and convey my deep gratitude to its thousands of current and former volunteers for their service to our country. •

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I today speak on a bill I introduced, and which the Senate passed last night, to extend the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999, Ed-Flex. My State of North Carolina is one of ten Ed-Flex states. As the citizens of North Carolina know well, gone are the days when an individual with just a high school diploma or GED could make a good living in industries such as textiles and furniture. For the future of North Carolina, it is imperative that we do all that we can to assist all students, regardless of background, reach high academic standards. Only through a strong public education system can we secure a bright economic future for individual citizens and for our communities.

Ed-Flex is a program that allows the Secretary of Education to delegate to states with strong assessment and accountability systems the authority to waive certain Federal education requirements that may, in certain instances, impede local efforts to reform and improve education. By allowing additional flexibility in their implementation of Federal programs, Ed-Flex is designed to help local districts and their schools implement the educational reforms needed to raise student academic achievement.

The Ed-Flex waivers in North Carolina are helping local school systems improve student achievement while meeting Federal No Child Left Behind requirements in a number of ways. Examples of how local schools and districts are using Ed-Flex to advance local reform strategies include: providing tutoring for low-achieving or at-risk students through coordinating Federal, state, and local services; developing more inclusive parent involvement initiatives; collaborating and planning with Head Start, developmental specialists, and faculty from local day care centers to facilitate a smoother transition and more appropriate placement of pre-K students; implementing a hands-on, inquiry-based science curriculum to promote critical thinking skills; providing for ongoing literacy group instruction that allows students to move into and out of the groups, as necessary, during the school year; and expanding afterschool science clubs and purchasing resources for afterschool programs.

Ed-Flex was first enacted as a demonstration program in 1994 as part of Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Initially, the Secretary of Education was authorized to designate six states as Ed-Flex demonstration states. The 1996 amendments to the Goals 2000 legislation authorized the granting of Ed-Flex