

very remarkable record. He is now the longest serving Senator in the history of the Senate. The Senate, the legislative body that means so much to him, now honors him for his achievement and for the remarkable record of service that he has given to the United States. I appreciate having the opportunity to be a part of our recognition of our colleague and his commitment to public service and the people of his home State of West Virginia.

For almost 48 years now, ROBERT C. BYRD has carried the title of U.S. Senator. I think it is fair to say that no one has done so with a greater awareness of what it means to be a Senator and of all the institution of the Senate represents. He is truly our institutional memory and he is the master of the Senate's rules and procedures. No one knows better than he the precedents and prerogatives of the Senate, and no one is a better protector, promoter and defender of them than he is.

It is not just for the length of his service that Senator BYRD is being honored, however. It isn't so much the years he has served but the service he has provided to the people of the United States and his State of West Virginia that has earned him the accolades he has received and will continue to receive from his colleagues and his constituents.

Our celebration of this moment and all he has achieved is softened by the loss of his beloved wife Erma, his greatest friend and supporter, his companion through life and almost 69 years of marriage, who passed away recently. I am sure she is looking down on us all, proud and thrilled to see Senator BYRD's continued efforts to address the issues of importance to his beloved friends of West Virginia and to note his recognition for being their champion for so many years.

During my service in the Senate I have appreciated working with Senator BYRD on a variety of issues, most recently the Miner Safety Act. We were both there at the President's side as he took up his pen and signed the bill into law. As he did, he noted Senator BYRD's presence because he knew the bill was the result of Senator BYRD's heartfelt concern for the miners of his State, for their safety, and the security of their families.

I have no doubt that if we were to look up the words "constituent service" in any book it would immediately refer us to Senator BYRD's work in the Senate. He has been an active and effective advocate for the people of West Virginia and he has worked tirelessly and diligently to address their needs in the Congress.

Looking back, Senator BYRD's life reads like a Hollywood movie script. He graduated first in his high school class and married his high school sweetheart. He then spent 12 years saving the money he needed to start college.

Through the years that followed, he held a variety of jobs that gave him an

understanding of the needs of the working people of his State. He also developed his talent for the fiddle, and soon became known for that as well. Before long he was a member of the State legislature and, not too long thereafter, he came to the Senate.

Here in the Senate, no one has shown a greater understanding of the history and meaning of the U.S. Constitution and the role it plays in shaping our values and our way of life as Americans. We both have a habit of carrying a copy in our pocket to remind us of our job here in the Senate and our responsibility as Senators to adhere to the provisions of the Constitution and all it says and requires us to do.

Whenever I think of Senator BYRD, the first thing that comes to mind is his incredible knowledge and understanding of world history and the American experience. He also has a profound and substantive mastery of the legacy of the written word. Whenever he takes to the floor to present his views on an issue he always has a ready reference to the precedents of the past, or the words of some great author who had written something appropriate to the moment.

Now, Senator BYRD, the great student of the history of our Nation and so much more, is himself a part of the great story of America and the traditions of the Senate. Every day he joins us here to deliberate on the issues before the Senate, he writes another chapter of his own life's story, a story that will be forever told and retold back in his home State, in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia, by the people who live there who will forever remember him and his legacy as their Senator—a legacy that will never be forgotten.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

1ST SERGEANT MICHAEL MATTHEWS
SERGEANT KENNETH KRAUS
STAFF SERGEANT JACOB LONG

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, it is my honor today to pay tribute to three courageous soldiers from the city of Roswell, GA, whose service to country and community merits grateful recognition.

1SG Michael Matthews has served 21 years in the U.S. Army and Army National Guard and is currently a member of Charlie Co., 108th Armored Regiment, 48th Brigade of the Georgia Army National Guard. On August 30, 2005, Sergeant Matthews was seriously wounded when two Iraqis detonated an Improvised Explosive Device next to his convoy 25 miles south of Bagdad. Sergeant Matthews continues to recover from his injuries, and following his recovery, the Roswell Police Department will welcome him back to his position on the force. Sergeant Matthews worked for 17 years as a uniform police officer and SWAT team member and, in 2005, was named the Police Officer of the Year.

SGT Kenneth Kraus served as a U.S. Marine on duty at the U.S. Embassy in Iran during February of 1979. As revolutionaries overpowered the Embassy, Sergeant Kraus successfully negotiated the release of several American civilians before he was wounded and taken hostage himself. Beaten and interrogated repeatedly, he was given a 20 minute trial and sentenced to die the next day. Sergeant Kraus was pulled from his cell in the hours after his sentence while a representative from the U.S. Embassy finally secured his release. He was flown to Germany for medical treatment and then home to the United States. The Roswell Police Department has been fortunate to have Sergeant Kraus work with them as a detective for over 11 years.

SSG Jacob Long serves as Company Master Gunner in Charlie Co., First Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade of the Georgia Army National Guard. On April 22, 2006, Staff Sergeant Long returned from a year-long deployment in Iraq during which Charlie Co. became responsible for sending Baby Noor, an Iraqi infant with spinal bifida, on a flight to obtain vital treatment in the United States and Baby Noor underwent successful surgery in Atlanta. In addition to his service abroad, Sergeant Jacob has worked with the Roswell Parks and Recreation Department for over 10 years.

These individuals continue to better their community and their Nation with selfless dedication to their careers in public service. I am proud to join the city of Roswell, the State of Georgia, and our Nation in honoring these brave men who have exemplified service to others on the local, national, and international level.

A BLOW TO GUN TRAFFICKING

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a unique type of gun trafficking sting operation was completed recently. Teams of undercover law enforcement officials wearing hidden cameras traveled to Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia to make purchases which were designed to appear to be what are known as "straw purchases." Straw purchases are transactions that violate Federal law in which one individual submits to the required Federal background check for a gun that is clearly intended to be used by someone else. These purchasers play a crucial role in the illegal trafficking of guns by purchasing with the intention of reselling them to prohibited buyers.

In addition, a lawsuit was filed by the city of New York. The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn, asks the court to enforce gun laws regarding such sales and require extra training for and supervision of dealers. The lawsuit also seeks punitive and compensatory damages. According to New York City's Web site, its police have

confiscated more than 500 guns that were sold by the 15 dealers named in the lawsuit and subsequently used in crimes there.

In January 2001, a 12-year-old boy in New York City, playing with a semi-automatic handgun from a pawnshop in Summerville, SC, accidentally shot someone in the chest. The gun involved was one of 49 such guns from the store linked to crimes and accidents in New York City. As New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg pointed out, "Our suit offers clear and compelling evidence that guns sold by these dealers are used in crimes by people ineligible to own a gun far more frequently than guns from other dealers."

To build its case, the city of New York compiled a list of gun dealers based on data it received from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Investigators worked in pairs. One looked at the merchandise, talked with the salesman and handled the weapon, while the other wandered the store, seemingly uninterested. When it came time to complete the necessary background check forms, the first operator, often a man, would call over his partner, frequently a woman, who had not been part of the discussion of the weapon. The second investigator would fill out the background paperwork, and the first one would pay for the gun in cash. This procedure was used to clearly illustrate that the second person was making a "straw purchase" for the first person.

Gun-control advocates praise the sting operation and the lawsuit. This type of action sends a message to dealers that more government officials are not willing to look the other way. Other cities, including Gary, Indiana, Chicago and Detroit, have taken similar approaches in their own jurisdictions, often using local law enforcement officials. This operation however, marks the first time investigators across the country participated in such a sting involving a number of States.

I would like to commend everyone on both the Federal and local levels who aided in this investigation. This kind of illegal activity can be stopped by vigorously enforcing our existing gun laws, providing law enforcement with more tools to crack down on gun trafficking and corrupt gun dealers, and by passing sensible gun safety legislation.

PRELIMINARY 2005 UNIFORM CRIME REPORT

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a very sobering report just issued by our FBI—its Preliminary 2005 Uniform Crime Report. This is the gold standard of crime reports in our country, taken from statistics by more than 12,000 law enforcement agencies all across our country.

Here is what the report says: Murders are up 4.8 percent. This means that there were 16,900 victims in 2005—16,900 in a single year. This is the most murders since 1998 and the largest percent-

age increase in 15 years. Violent crime more generally, which also includes forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, rose 2 percent after seeing decreases over the last 3 years.

Some areas of the country were especially hard hit. The Midwest, for example, saw violent crime rise 5.7 percent. Medium-large towns—those with populations between half a million and 1 million—saw an increase in violent crime of 8.3 percent. Murders increased more than 12 percent in towns with populations between 50,000 and 250,000. These troubling increases come after more than a decade of record decreases in crime.

These historic decreases in crime happened for a reason and, I fear, the recent and dramatic increase in murders and violent crime are also happening for a reason.

Let me explain. In 1994, we passed the most sweeping anticrime bill in history. At the time, we faced a national crisis with respect to violent crime. Despite the tough-on-crime rhetoric of the 1980s, the Federal Government until that point had very little impact on crime rates. This is largely because only about 3 percent of all crimes are handled by the Federal Government.

We recognized in 1994 that the only way to seriously address crime in our communities would be to vigorously and consistently support State and local law enforcement. We made a commitment to do just that by creating the Community Oriented Policing Services Program—more commonly known as COPS.

This ambitious new program committed to put more than 100,000 new officers on the streets and to expand the concept of community-oriented policing. Crime rates went down every year for 8 consecutive years. Violent crime was reduced by 26 percent. The murder rate went down by 34 percent.

In just a few short years, Americans went from being afraid to go out on their streets to living in the safest neighborhoods in a generation. By giving State and local law enforcement the support they needed, we were able to improve the lives of millions of Americans.

I recognize there are many factors involved in whether crime rates go up and down and that the COPS Program was not the sole reason for this historic drop in violent crime. At the same time, the legacy of COPS is unmistakable. The Government Accountability Office, GAO, released a report in October 2005 that concluded what many police chiefs and sheriffs have said all along—the COPS Program helps reduce crime. Specifically, the GAO found that "as a demonstration of whether a federal program can affect crime rates through hiring officers and changing policing practices, the evidence indicates that COPS contributed to declines in crime above the levels of declines that would have been expected without it." For every \$1 in COPS hiring grant expenditures per capita,

there was a reduction of almost 30 index crimes per 100,000 persons.

Former Attorney General John Ashcroft called the COPS Program a "miraculous success." But, unfortunately, I fear that some of us have taken our eyes off the ball. Specifically, the Bush administration has forgotten the lessons we learned from the COPS Program. Despite the dramatic and historic COPS successes, President Bush has systematically eliminated the programs that helped to lay the foundation for our low crime rates.

President Bush has proposed to cut support for State and local law enforcement every year for the past 5 years, proposing a budget in 2007 that cut \$2 billion in guaranteed funding for State and local law enforcement from the amount we provided only 5 years ago. President Bush has steadily tried to kill the COPS hiring program, routinely trying to zero out all hiring funding.

And Congress has not held the line. During the 1990s, roughly \$1 billion per year was allocated for the COPS Program. In 2002, \$385 million was allocated to hire officers. That allocation was steadily reduced until last year when, for the first time, funding to hire officers was completely eliminated. Let me repeat: No Federal COPS funding whatsoever to hire officers. Adding insult to injury, President Bush has also proposed to zero out the Byrnes Justice Assistance Grant Program.

From 1994 to 2003, this wildly popular program provided around \$900 million per year to our States to improve their criminal justice systems, providing vital resources to our men and women officers. Since 2003, this number has steadily eroded, with President Bush proposing absolutely no funding in his 2007 budget request. And I fear that we are now seeing the results of this vast defunding of the COPS Program and the Byrne Program—a result that was certainly not unpredictable.

Earlier this year, in response to the President's latest budget request, the President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Mary Ann Viverette, stated: "these cuts have the potential to cripple the capabilities of law enforcement agencies nationwide and will undoubtedly force many departments to take officers off the streets, leading to more crime and violence in our hometowns and ultimately less security for our homeland."

Many of us in Congress have also tried to raise the warning flags repeatedly. This February, I released a report entitled, "Abandoning the Front Line: The Bush Administration's Record of Support for State and Local Law Enforcement" which warned that we need to keep our eye on the ball, otherwise we risk seeing dramatic increases in crime rates.

Another problem facing our local law enforcement agencies is the fact that the FBI is getting out of the crime business. Since 9/11, the number of FBI agents focusing on crime has gone