them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

PRESIDENTIAL SIGNING STATEMENTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, yesterday we were reminded, again, of the lawlessness of the Bush-Cheney administration as it continues its abuse of ''signing statements'' as part of a systematic pursuit of power without the checks and balances inherent in our constitutional democracy. A most distinguished task force of the American Bar Association has now released a unanimous report highly critical of this President's practice as ''contrary to the rule of law and our constitutional system of separation of powers.'' I thank the distinguish panel of conservatives and moderates, or Republicans and Democrats for their thoughtful report.

Let me be clear, this is not some academic debate without consequences. I have been seeking to draw attention to this surreptitious power-grab for at least 4 years, since this President's unusual signing statement following enactment of the Sarbanes-Oxley bill in 2002 to reign in corporate abuses that cost so many Americans their livelihoods and their retirement savings through Enron and other scandals. The President signed the bill but had secret ''reservations.'' That is when I first realized the President's unorthodox, unwise and unsound practice of signing a bill while crossing his fingers behind his back. We have seen it over and over again as this President insists on the equivalent of an unwritten line-item veto that would undermine the checks and balances of our constitutional separation of powers and that the Supreme Court correctly determined was unconstitutional.

Later this week, the President will be signing the reauthorization and revitalization of the Voting Rights Act, passed by the House with 390 votes and unanimously last week by the Senate. In the past I could have gone to the White House to witness the bill signing knowing that our three branches of government were all operating within their proper authority. That is the way we have operated for more than 200 years. But this year, with this President, that is not the way any longer. After the bill signing, after the celebration, after the bipartisan plaudits and after the President takes credit for the civil rights advances that our bill is intended to represent—after all this—we will have to wait to see whether there is a belated presidential document, a so-called ''signing statement.'' Only then will we see if the President will seek to create a gloss that Congress did not intend, or modify a provision of law more to his liking, or declare some provision of law something he and his administration will not enforce. That is wrong. That is the opposite of the rule of law. And no one—not even the President—is above the law.

The Constitution places the lawmaking power, ''All legislative Powers'' in the Congress. That is an article I power. A check on the congressional power is the requirement that ''before [a bill] becomes a Law'' it must be presented to the President. Section 7 of article I of the Constitution provides: ''If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated.'' Of course the Constitution then contemplates congressional power to override a presidential objection or veto. That is our system, that is our law. The President has the option to veto—in fact after 5 years in office, he finally exercised that power last week when he vetoed the stem cell research legislation. I disagreed with his decision to veto that bill, but it was within his constitutional power to do it. He does not have the power to issue a decree that he will pick and choose which provisions of laws to follow in statements issued after Congress passes a law. What this President is doing is wrong.

Last month, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the use of these signing statements by the Bush-Cheney administration. I noted that we are at a pivotal moment in our Nation's history, where Americans are faced with a President who makes sweeping claims for almost unchecked Executive power. This President's use of signing statements is unprecedented, although presaged by the work of Samuel Alito at the Meese Justice Department during the Reagan Presidency—now Justice Alito on the Supreme Court. This administration is now routinely using signing statements to proclaim which parts of the law the President will follow, which parts he will ignore, and which he will reinterpret. This is what I have called ''cherry-picking'' and it is wrong.

This President's broad use of signing statements to try to rewrite the laws passed by the Congress poses a grave threat to our constitutional system of checks and balances. During his 5 years in office, President Bush has abused his bill signing statements to assign his own interpretations to laws passed by Congress.

According to a review of these statements conducted by The Boston Globe, President Bush has employed signing statements to ignore or disobey more than 750 provisions enacted by the Congress since 2001, more than all previous Presidents in the history of our Nation combined. According to scholarly research that number now tops 800 provisions of law.

I have alluded to the President's signing statement in 2002 in connection with the Sarbanes-Oxley law designed to combat corporate fraud. The President used his signing statement to attempt to narrow a provision protecting corporate whistleblowers in a way that would have afforded them very little protection. Senator GRASSLEY and I wrote a letter to the President stating that his narrow interpretation was at odds with the plain language of the statute, and the administration reluctantly relented on this view but only after much protest.

We also witnessed the President's fondness for signing statements earlier this year, when after months of debate and negotiations in Congress, the President issued a signing statement for the USA PATRIOT ACT reauthorization language in which he stated his intentions not to follow the reporting and oversight provisions contained in that bill. I noted this abuse at the time. When I voted against that reauthorization, I explained it was because I did not have confidence that the oversight provisions we succeeded in incorporating into the law would be respected. What little doubt was left by the self-serving signing statement was erased last week when the Attorney General of the United States refused to commit to following the law.

This President has also used signing statements to challenge laws banning torture, on affirmative action and prohibiting the censorship of scientific data. In fact, time and again, this President has stood before the American people, signed laws enacted by their representatives in Congress, while all along crossing his fingers behind his back. And, while this President used to boast—until his veto of stem cell research legislation—that he was the first modern President to have never vetoed a bill, he has cleverly used his signing statements as a de facto line-item veto to cherry-pick which laws he will enforce in a manner not consistent with our Constitution.

Under our constitutional system of government, when Congress passes a bill and the President signs it into law, that should be the end of the story. At that moment the President's constitutional duty is to ''take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed.'' That is the article II power, the executive power, to ''execute'' the laws, it is not a legislative power. So when the President, including this President, takes the oath of office and swears on the Bible, he does so, in the words of the Constitution, ''Before he enter on the Execution of his Office,'' and swears that he will ''faithfully execute'' the office of President and ''preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.'' I remind this President and this administration that the Constitution has more than one article and that ''All legislative Power'' is vested in Congress, not some ''unitary executive.''

When the President uses signing statements to unilaterally rewrite the laws enacted by the people's representatives in Congress, he undermines the rule of law and our constitutional

checks and balances designed to protect the rights of the American people.

This President's abuse of signing statements is all the more dangerous because he has packed the courts with judges willing to defer to him and presidential authority. I have noted that Justice Alito helped develop this device. I could not help but note that Justice Scalia, who is famous for not consulting legislative history, reached out in his dissent in the recent Hamdan decision to reference a recent Presidential signing statement.

These signing statements are a diabolical device but this President will continue to use and abuse them, if the Republican Congress lets him. So far, this Congress has done exactly that. Whether it is torture, warrantless eavesdropping on American citizens, or the unlawful detention of military prisoners, this Republican-led Congress has been willing to turn a blind eye and rubberstamp the questionable actions of this administration, regardless of the consequences to our Constitution or civil liberties.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the Voting Rights Act, VRA. Unfortunately a longstanding medical appointment kept me from casting my vote in favor of this legislation last week and I want there to be no question as to my support for the VRA. For over 50 years, the VRA has protected the cornerstone of democracy: the right to vote. Congress enacted the VRA in response to evidence that some States and counties had denied many citizens access to the ballot because of their race, ethnicity, and language-minority status. The creators of this law were convinced, as am I, that a strong America is one that reflects the feelings and opinions of all Americans. That means that everyone has the right to vote.

Provisions of the VRA prohibit election laws that would deny or abridge voting rights based on race, color, or membership in a language minority. The act allows citizens to challenge discriminatory voting practices and procedures and prohibits the use of any test or device as a condition of voter registration. Such provisions seem like common sense today, but they were not always so widely supported. We must recommit today not to return to the mistakes of yesterday. I am pleased that the Senate approved the reauthorization of this critical act. It correctly ensures that every citizen has a stake and a voice in our country's future.

INSTABILITY IN SOMALIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am deeply troubled by reports in the press that the Islamic courts in Somalia are advancing on the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government, TFG, and are apparently ignoring recently signed cease-fire agreements. It is imperative that the Islamic courts recognize the TFG as the official governing body of Somalia and that it abide by the cease fire agreed to on June 22, 2006, in Khartoum. The Islamic courts must work in good faith to strengthen the TFG and actively commit to the development of a more inclusive and representative government of Somalia.

For this to happen, the international community, including the United States, needs to be fully engaged. The United States, in particular, must develop a comprehensive strategy for Somalia that utilizes all facets of its power and capabilities and must ramp up its diplomatic efforts throughout the region and the international community to bring this crisis to an end. Unfortunately, it can't do that if it doesn't have the resources or the people in place to deal effectively with the complexity of this problem. The U.S. Government needs to appoint a senior envoy for Somalia to pull together a strategy and to engage full time with international and regional partners in addressing this crisis. It also needs more staff and more resources to work with to help execute this strategy and to contribute to international efforts to bring about lasting peace throughout the region. The administration should work closely with Congress to identify what additional resources are needed for Somalia, given the recent escalation of tension there.

That said, it is important to realize that efforts to both establish long-term peace and to eradicate terrorist networks and safe havens in Somalia are complimentary. The U.S. Government must recognize that long-term stability in Somalia is our best weapon against terrorist networks, extremist organizations, and the conditions that allow them to seek safe haven there. We must look at poverty reduction programs, economic development efforts, support for democratic institutions, anticorruption efforts, and education as the core elements of a new Somalia strategy.

As we learned in Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the conditions that breed extremist and terrorist organizations. Accordingly, it is essential to recognize that any attempt to address instability in Somalia must address a range of root causes or facilitating conditions: a weak and dysfunctional central government, extreme poverty, corruption, conflict, disease, and drought.

It is imperative that the U.S. Government begin playing a leadership role in helping stabilize Somalia and the region and that it do so immediately. We need a comprehensive approach to engaging with regional actors, the international community, and the U.N. to find a permanent solution to this crisis. Such an approach will contribute to stability throughout the Horn of Africa and to our national security.

NATIONAL KOREAN WAR VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, on Thursday, July 20, 2006, I introduced S. 3700, which would honor the valiant efforts of our Korean war veterans, who risked their lives fighting against communism on the Korean peninsula. As we honor the 53rd anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, I am proud to reintroduce this legislation recognizing Korean War Armistice Day. The Korean War Veterans Recognition Act of 2006 would include National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day among the days when the American flag should especially be displayed. Earlier this year, Representative SUE KELLY reintroduced similar legislation into the House.

National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day is July 27, which recognizes that negotiators signed an armistice agreement at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. This led to North Korea's withdrawal across the 38th parallel and allowed the Republic of South Korea to be free from attempts to force communism upon its people.

This year, as we commemorate the 53rd anniversary of the signing of the Korean War Armistice, it is important that we take a moment to reflect upon the sacrifices our men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have made in brave service to our Nation since its inception. I am pleased to introduce this legislation to respectfully honor and pay tribute to the tremendous courage and sacrifice demonstrated by the men and women who served in the Korean war. As U.S. soldiers continue to fight for freedom around the world, we must remember the sacrifice and valor of their brethren who helped protect and promote American values on the Korean peninsula over a half century ago.

CELEBRATE AMERICA CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the five poems, the winner and runner-up entries for the Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest about the contribution of immigrants to America, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MY MOM ''THUY''

(By Jasminh Duc Schelkopf)

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF INDIANA 2006
NATIONAL CONTEST GRAND PRIZE WINNER

My mother's name is Thuy. She was born in Saigon, South Vietnam. Her father was a 3-star Lieutenant General for the South Vietnam military and her family had almost everything that you could possibly think of before the civil war of Vietnam. However, when they lost their country, they lost everything. After the war, all they had left was their hope and beliefs.

In 1975, North Vietnam won the war. When my mother was only 12 years old (8th Grade), she and her brother and sister were forced to go to Canada. The rest of her family was