

Drought Monitor says is the third most extreme drought in the history of the United States. I do not know how they measure drought. I do not know how they make that determination. These are scientific experts. I trust that they know what they are doing.

I say to my colleagues that I have seen firsthand land that looks like a moonscape which would normally be lush.

These people are hanging by a thread. The question is, Do they have the chance to survive until next year or are they done? Many of them are going to be out of business. But many more will be, if there is a failure to act, if there is a failure by Congress to do what it has almost always done in the case of natural disaster, which is to provide disaster relief on an emergency basis.

We don't budget for natural disasters. There is no line item in the budget for natural disaster. Perhaps there should be, but there is none.

I, frankly, think it would be a wise thing to do. At least we could take the average for some period of time and reduce it by 25 percent and put that in so we would have some way of having additional discipline in the budget. But we don't have that. That is where we are.

Again, I hope we are able to reach some agreement today.

I yield the floor and 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. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator DEWINE be recognized for such time as he will consume and that I then be recognized following him.

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

The Senator from Ohio.

#### MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 100, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 100) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint reso-

lution be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

If not, without objection, it is so ordered.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 100) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER P. LYONS

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, this afternoon I come to the Senate floor to pay tribute to Marine LCpl Christopher Lyons from Mansfield, OH. On July 28, 2005, Lance Corporal Lyons was killed when his unit encountered hostile fire in Iraq. He was only 24 years old.

Lance Corporal Lyons is survived by his wife Bethany and their daughter Ella; his mother Phyllis Lyons; his father and step-mother, Paul and Debbie Lyons; his grandmothers Irmil Humphreys and Joyce Lyons; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Christopher's family and friends remember him as an exceptional young man, someone who was always full of fun. With a quick wit and an infectious smile, his own love of life always brought happiness to those around him. Caring, selfless, loving, and extremely intelligent, Christopher had the gift of bringing out the best in everyone. He was simply the type of person who stood out in a crowd.

Christopher graduated in 1999 from Shelby High School, where he was enrolled in the Tech Prep Program at Pioneer Career and Technology Center. His vice-principal, Tim Tarvin, describes him as a "big-hearted kid, who always wanted to do the right thing for people."

Kevin Adkins, Christopher's youth pastor, remembers the impact that Christopher had on everyone who knew him. He said this:

As a teenager, [Christopher] was the type of man that I have always strived to be. I'm not so sure how much I actually taught him, but just by his life, alone, he has taught me volumes. As a pastor, I was both humbled and uplifted by Chris's excellence and tenacity toward life. His example will live on in the many lives (like ours) that he has touched. I hope to raise my own two sons to be of such caliber.

After completing school, Christopher became a sales representative in the advertising department at the News Journal in Mansfield, Ohio. Advertising Director Scott Miller describes him as a polite young man who always took his obligations seriously. And Tom Brennan, publisher of the News Journal, said this about him:

Christopher was an outstanding young man. He was the ultimate professional. Simply put, he was polite and positive. Any employer would have found a spot for him. The staff here will surely miss him.

Christopher's widow Bethany recalls her husband's ability to make everyone

laugh and the way that he would tickle her to get her to smile. They were married in September 2003. Christopher's youth pastor remembers meeting Bethany for the first time. He remarked, "I will always remember that I thought you two were the cutest couple I have ever seen. It would take a very special person to catch Chris's eye."

Christopher was inspired to join the military by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. His unit was called to active duty in 2005, and Christopher was sent to California for training. In March of that same year, he was deployed to Iraq.

Months before his deployment, Christopher and Bethany became expectant parents. For Christopher, who was so devoted to his family, it was a momentous occasion, and he was so proud of a t-shirt he wore with the word "Daddy" on the front of it.

Christopher's daughter Ella was born while her father was serving in Iraq. Although he was overseas, Christopher was able to see his new daughter on a web camera and in the many photos that his wife and his mother sent to him. And as she grows up, Ella will have numerous emails and photos from Christopher to treasure.

Christopher regularly wrote to family and friends from Iraq. Two of these letters were sent to the News Journal in Mansfield and were published in their editorial pages. The letters told about Christopher's experience in Iraq, and what it was like to lose a sergeant in his unit during combat. "When all is said and done," he wrote, "the greatest act is when one of our own gives his or her life in service [to] our country and each other."

This, of course, is the sacrifice that Christopher, himself, made for our Nation and for the ideals of freedom and democracy that we all hold dear. Christopher believed in his mission in Iraq. And, while paying tribute to eight of his Marine brothers who had fallen in combat, he wrote the following in one of his letters:

The Corps values of honesty, courage and commitment have served as our cornerstone as we press on to put down the insurgency and win the war on terror.

The people [in the] villages were grateful for our presence, often showing gratitude and appreciation by offering tea, blankets, or simply a smile and wave.

Seeing this reaffirms that we have a purpose working toward a greater good in this country. Honoring our fallen brothers, we will continue the fight upholding the highest standards and working to break this dark oppressive force that lingers over the Iraqi citizens.

These are very impressive words, Mr. President, from a young man who was just 24-years-old.

Christopher's widow remembers that Christopher realized he could be killed while in serving in Iraq. But, she also remembers that Christopher, after being deployed, "saw how much good the United States was doing for Iraq."

Christopher's first person accounts of Lima Company's heroism spread to the

families and friends of readers eager to hear from one of their own. In Greenwich, OH, Christopher's 9 year-old cousin Devin Back wrote of Christopher's heroism in a poem entitled, "My Hero:"

My hero is my cousin, Christopher.

He is nice.

He is playful.

He is in Iraq.

My cousin is very smart.

Christopher, my cousin, is not afraid of anything.

He is cool. He is happy a lot.

He writes to us from Iraq.

He takes a lot of risks.

Christopher's aunt Gwen Gwinner remembers that he never said anything bad about anyone. And his cousin Amy Blevins remembers that he was the definition of honorable, even before he joined the Marines. Throughout his entire life, Christopher was simply the kind of person who was respectful of and considerate to everyone.

Christopher's mother describes her son as her best friend, as someone who was always "kind, gentle, caring, compassionate, and giving."

"People have said to me how proud I must be of him," she said. "I was proud of him before he entered the military because of his integrity and his ability to let things roll off his back."

At an early age, Phyllis taught her son the importance of honesty, hard work, and respect. Christopher used an acronym to encompass his beliefs and values. The acronym was "WHO:" W- for willingness—to always be willing to do what you must and what is asked of you; H- for honesty and integrity—to be honest about what and why you do what you do; and O for obedience—always obey those who have rule over you, including God first and your mother.

From boot camp and Iraq, Christopher would write his mother Phyllis to say that he would keep the faith and be alright—and that he knew "WHO" he was. Phyllis says it is Christopher she now turns to for comfort. "He is now my strength and guidance," she said.

I am honored that I had the opportunity to meet Christopher's family and friends during a memorial in his honor, all of whom remember him as a special and unique person. He will never be forgotten by those who knew him. Christopher was an avid Scrabble player, and there was a message for him spelled out in Scrabble letters at his funeral. It read simply: "B-E-L-O-V-E-D" beloved.

The spirit of LCpl Christopher Lyons will never be forgotten. He had an insight into life and a sense of humor that was truly unique. He understood the importance of service, and was a man who was dedicated to family, community, and country.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep the family of LCpl Christopher Lyons in our thoughts and prayers.

MAJOR RAMON J. MENDOZA, JR.

Mr. President, I also rise today to pay tribute to Marine MAJ Ramon J.

Mendoza Jr., from Columbus, OH. On November 15, 2005, Major Mendoza died from wounds that were sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He was 37 years old. He is survived by his wife Karen, his daughter Kiana, and his son Aleksandr. He is also survived by his two brothers Niola and Jermaine.

The death of Major Ray Mendoza has been felt by many. He was a man considered indestructible—someone whom his friends and family describe as "larger than life." His smile will always be remembered. It was huge and put everyone he met immediately at ease.

Ray was also devoted to serving his Nation and his Marines. He was dedicated, compassionate, and hard-working. His death is a loss not only for those who knew and loved him, but for our entire country.

Ray was born in Pleasantville, NJ, in 1968. He moved to Queens, NY, as a boy and graduated from John Adams High School in 1986. He then attended the prestigious Blair Academy in New Jersey for a year of study, where he was captain of the football team and a member of the wrestling team.

Many admired Ray at Blair Academy for his hard work and dedication. Bob Latessa, his former wrestling coach, remembers that "There was no task too tall. He never got down. He never ever felt sorry for himself or felt like he couldn't do something. This is a kid that just blew everybody away. I feel lucky and privileged to have known him."

Ray carried his tremendous work ethic and positive attitude with him to the Ohio State University, where he was a heavyweight wrestler. Coach Russ Hellickson described him as an aggressive athlete who pursued his goals with passion. "He wasn't a guy who stood around," he said. Coach Hellickson will never forget the young man who was one of his star wrestlers. Ray "forced the action and went after things," he recalled. "He was a pleasure to watch. I always felt he was a very mature kid. He was committed to accomplishing what he set out to do."

Ray lettered for the Buckeyes in 1992 and 1993 and was the Big Ten runner-up in the heavyweight division in 1993. His contributions to the Buckeyes will never be forgotten. They placed fourth in the Nation while he was there, and Ray's overtime victory against a reigning champ in the 1993 Big Ten tournament remains one of the program's most thrilling moments. Adam DiSabato, one of Ray's former teammates, remembers that Ray was the "key ingredient" to their team. "He solidified our team," he said. "He was the type of guy who wouldn't argue if you told him to do something that would benefit the team."

Today, wrestlers at Ohio State remember Ray by wearing a patch bearing his name on their singlets. And during one game, the OSU football team wore a decal on their helmets in Ray's memory.

While he was attending OSU, Ray met Karen Miller, the love of his life. Karen recalls that Ray began thinking of joining the Marines soon after graduating. According to Karen, he simply felt that it was his calling. She said, "We were married and getting set to launch a family. He said, 'I just have to do this.' It was almost like a calling to the pulpit."

Ray completed Officer Candidate School at Quantico, VA, and entered the Marine Corps in February 1995. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant in August 1995 and assigned as an infantry officer at the basic school.

While in the military, Ray continued his competitive wrestling career. He competed for the All-Marine Wrestling Team and was the Central Region Olympic Trial Greco-Roman Champion at 100 kilograms. One year, he placed second in the nation in the Armed Services National Wrestling Tournament. And in 1996, Ray was able to live the dream of millions when he became an alternate for the U.S. wrestling team at the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

But Ray was much more than an incredible wrestling talent. He brought the same dedication and determination that he had displayed on the mat to his service as a Marine. In October 1997, Ray was selected for augmentation and promoted to the rank of captain. He now had a regular commission in the United States Marine Corps.

Ray was deployed to Iraq with his unit in June 2003. Upon being redeployed after combat, he assumed command of Echo Company. And on October 1, 2005, Ray was promoted to the rank of major in the operational theatre.

Ray was a true leader in the Marines who always inspired others. Courage and dedication were attributes that he repeatedly displayed. In Husayba, Iraq, Ray positioned himself at the point of attack to maneuver his platoons and attachments, without regard to his own safety. While leading from the front, Ray enabled his company to defeat several enemy strong points and allowed the battalion to maintain its initiative as it advanced through the city.

MG Richard F. Natonski said this about the service of Ray and his comrades in Iraq:

For a period of 9 days—starting November 5, 2005—Echo Company made history. Company Echo, under Mendoza's leadership, cleared over 600 buildings, found 16 weapon caches, and detained more than 300 insurgents.

Major Mendoza was truly loved by the marines under his command. SSG Boyde Allen described him as "the best platoon commander I've ever served under." And, SGT David Sanchez remembers Major Mendoza's effort to get to know his marines, and how one day he took the time to ask him about his sister's wedding ceremony. "He was really surprising," said Sergeant Sanchez. "He really knew his marines."

Ray's service to this Nation has earned him many awards, including a posthumous Bronze Star. But the awards are not what matter most. According to Ray's wife:

Awards are great, but the most fulfilling reward I can receive and our family can receive is knowing that the Marines completed their mission. His boys finished the job.

Karen has started the Ray Mendoza Blair Wrestling Scholarship fund in her husband's memory, which will provide a financial contribution to a student-athlete attending Blair Academy. And Karen's own bravery and dedication to the Corps have been remarkable to everyone around her. "She's a phenomenal example for all of us," said Judy L. Svendsen, Karen's longtime friend. "She's always thinking of the military families, putting them first."

Mr. President, those who knew Ray all agree that he died doing what he loved to do—and that was leading marines. "He was always right in the friction," remembers 1SG Dennis J. Downing. "He always thought his best point of view was right up there with the Marines."

Perhaps the words of SGM Sylvester D. Daniels say it best:

We all love Major Mendoza, make no mistake about that.

Without a doubt, Ray will continue to lead and inspire even after his passing. Karen says that she will never forget what happened shortly after receiving word that her husband had died. Her 8-year-old son, Alec, wrote a note and hung it from his bedroom door. The note read,

Be a leader, not a follower.

I would like to conclude with words from a tribute that Ray's former wrestling coach wrote and posted on the Ohio State web site:

Much like in the Marines, success on the wrestling mat is a consequence of the diligence and discipline that goes in to the training. Ray knew the only way to truly perform was to immerse yourself in the preparation. Do it hard, do it right, and do it relentlessly with passionate resolve.

Ray put his heart and soul into every lift, every run and every match he ever wrestled for the Buckeyes. To a man, his teammates are grieving today. To know Ray, was to love him and respect him. No excuses ever! He was never absent, never late, and always ready to do his part with a smile and 100% commitment.

Ray was a powerful man with a kind and caring heart. He was the ultimate team player in that he cared as much or more about you as he did about himself. Ray loved his family, he loved his fellow Marines, and he loved his wrestling Buckeyes.

Ray showed us all that leadership is not a position, it is an action. Ray is my hero, too. Good bye, my friend.

My wife Fran and I will continue to keep the family and friends of Ray Mendoza in our thoughts and prayers. He was a truly outstanding marine. He was a truly outstanding human being. He will never be forgotten.

CORPORAL JEFFREY A. BOSKOVITCH

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute on the Senate floor to Marine

Cpl Jeffrey Allen Boskovitch of Seven Hills, OH. Corporal Boskovitch was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, based in Brook Park, OH. He was one of six members of a sniper unit to be killed on August 1, 2005, by small-arms fire in Iraq. He was 25 years of age.

Jeff—as he was called by family and friends—lived a life that epitomized the virtues of bravery and dedication. His zest for life was both admirable and rare. He loved shooting pool with friends, bungee jumping, hot-air ballooning, and playing paint-ball. In the eyes of his young nephews, he was the "best" because he was so "cool" and because he loved the videogame HALO as much as they did. He is greatly missed by everyone who knew him.

Jeff graduated from Normandy High School in 1999, where he played quarterback and wide receiver for the Invaders. Soon after graduating, he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves and began studying criminal justice at Cuyahoga Community College. He graduated from the program as president of his class in 2001. At the time he was sent overseas, he was working full time as a corporate security supervisor for National City Bank and part time as a deputy with the Geauga County Sheriff.

One of Jeff's classmates, Tim Ellis, recognized his friend's natural gifts as a leader. Tim remembers how Jeff—who was in outstanding shape—would fall back in order to encourage the slower guys during their training runs. "Hang in there," he would say, "only one lap left." Tim wrote the following in remembrance of his friend on an Internet tribute page:

Jeff was elected class president without asking for it or even mentioning it. He was a born leader. Jeff had a higher calling, and I will forever look up to him.

In January of 2005, Jeff followed that higher calling when his unit was deployed to Iraq. And Jeff found more than comrades in his sniper unit—he found brothers. They became a tightly knit group, so close that Jeff later declined a promotion just to be able to stay with them.

I would like to quote the words of SGT Brian Casagrande, who served with the snipers of 3-25. In a eulogy for his fallen comrade, he had this to say:

Jeff Boskovitch was the platoon clown. He had a great sense of humor. He would often imitate other people and we loved to pick on him too. . . . He proved himself to be a valuable asset to the platoon, and was a comforting, sometimes comical voice on the other side of the handset.

Jeff loved his unit, and he loved his marines. According to his father Jim, "He was always one to do the honorable thing." And in the words of his uncle Dan, Jeff "had the biggest heart in the world. He was just a great kid."

Jeff truly was a person who cared deeply. One example of his compassion is the story about a puppy that Jeff found in a paper bag carried by an Iraqi boy. He asked the child to sell the

puppy to him for a quarter and three jellybeans. The boy agreed, and Jeff named the dog Beans. Beans became the mascot of the entire 3-25 and would help them on missions. One time, she even alerted the unit to an attempted ambush. In an e-mail to his mother, Kathy, Jeff expressed the love for his new friend with the following simple words: "Beans is so cool." He sent his mother pictures of Beans, and Kathy began to raise money to bring the dog back to Ohio.

After Jeff died, Kathy embarked on a quest, a quest to bring his dog Beans home, petitioning the aid of both politicians and military officials. The story of "Operation Beans" was printed in newspapers in both the United States and Iraq. Three months later, after crossing the Atlantic on a military transport plane, Beans disembarked in Ohio and found Jeff's mother Kathy waiting for her. On the way home, Beans and Kathy made a stop at Jeff's final resting place.

Jeff was a young man who had a bright future before him. He was an aspiring police officer, someone willing to step forward as a role model for the entire community and for those who loved him.

Jeff was also planning a family. Days before he was killed, he spoke with his beloved fiancée, Shelly Tevis, and selected a date for their wedding. The date was to be October 14, 2006. In Shelly's words, "Jeff just embodied wholesomeness and strength, everyone looked up to him, and we will miss him very, very much."

Mr. President, I would like to conclude with the words of Jeff's father. This is what he said about his son:

We're proud of him. And we look at him as a true hero—just like the other men and women who are serving in Iraq.

Indeed, the world is a better place because Jeff Boskovitch was in it. He will forever be remembered for his sincere compassion to help and serve others, for his sense of humor, and for his dedication to his friends, family, and country. He will be remembered as a devoted son, a kind brother, a beloved fiancée, and the best friend of a dog named Beans.

My wife Fran and I will continue to keep Jeff's family and friends in our thoughts and in our prayers.

LANCE CORPORAL AARON H. REED

Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to talk about Marine LCpl Aaron Reed from Chillicothe, OH, and pay tribute to him. On August 3, 2005, Lance Corporal Reed was killed when his military vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device during combat operations in Iraq. He was only 21 years old—just 20 days shy of his 22nd birthday.

Aaron was one of the marines with Lima Company—Marine Force Reserve's 3rd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, based in Columbus, OH. Everyone knows their story, which is one that has touched hearts across this Nation. On the day

Aaron died, 13 other men in his unit—eight of them from Ohio—died alongside him. It was a tragedy that was felt by the Nation and felt by the State of Ohio.

Aaron's family and friends remember him as a quiet young man with an upbeat demeanor. His smile was truly something special. With it, he could light up an entire room. He was easy-going and social with his friends, always ready to laugh. At the same time, though, when it came time to get things done, no one worked harder than he did.

Aaron's capacity for leadership was unique, and he was active in both his church and community. His words always had a great impact on those who heard them. A 2001 graduate of Southeastern High School—where he had run both cross-country and track and field—he had been elected by his classmates to serve as senior class president. Leonard Steyer, Aaron's principal, said, "When you're senior class president, that should tell you quite a bit about what kind of young man he was."

Aaron was also known for his compassion. His mother Sara was active with Habitat for Humanity, and they were planning to help build a house together when Aaron returned from Iraq. In the words of Cody Elam, one of Aaron's friends from high school, Aaron "was the kind of guy to give you the shirt off his back if you needed it."

Aaron joined the Marines shortly after graduating. He wasn't the first member of his family to serve in the military—his older brother Matt was stationed in Kosovo at the time. According to his father, Steve, Aaron simply wanted the challenge of being a marine.

It is impossible to remember LCpl Aaron Reed without also remembering the other marines of Lima Company. The bond among these men was something we do not see every day. They were truly brothers. Because Aaron had dark hair and glasses, they nicknamed him after the fictional wizard "Harry Potter."

Before his death, Aaron had been promoted to team leader. According to his friend Joey Barker, Aaron was spending almost all of his spare time analyzing past missions to better prepare for the next one. But, this is simply the kind of man Aaron was—always hard-working and always willing to do his best for others.

Aaron kept in touch with his family and friends regularly while in Iraq, calling and e-mailing frequently. Aaron and his friend Joey had been playing an intense game of tic-tac-toe through the mail. Joey remembers that Aaron had been "in one of the best moods he'd ever heard him, laughing and joking around." At the time, he had been in Iraq since March 2005, and was scheduled to come home in late September.

Aaron's dad's last communication from Aaron was through e-mail, a

short note letting him know his son was safe. His dad still chuckles when he reads the greeting—"Hey Daddy-O," using the nickname he had given his father, "nothing much going on here. Just the daily grind . . . Just thought I'd drop you a short note to let you know I was doing fine." And in an e-mail to his mother, Sara, Aaron wrote, "Mom, I'm just out here doing the best I know how to do."

It was typical of Aaron to describe his service in Iraq as "nothing much." He was always willing to serve others and do so with a cheerful smile on his face.

Aaron remained positive throughout his time in Iraq. Angela Flowers had been his friend since the time they met in seventh grade, and the two wrote each other frequently during Aaron's deployment. Aaron called when he was able, and Angela remembers the last time they talked. "He was extremely optimistic and positive," she said. "He was still the same old Reed."

Hundreds of mourners gathered at Aaron's funeral to pay their respects. Family and friends talked about Aaron the jokester, Aaron the faithful friend, and Aaron the steadfast teammate. They also laughed and told funny tales about joy riding and the typical teenage pranks that Aaron had played.

They also spoke of Aaron's faith in God. Aaron was wearing a cross around his neck when he died. It was recovered and returned to his mother Sara. She wears that cross every day.

At his funeral, Aaron's friend Joey played guitar and sang one of Aaron's favorite songs: "The Dance," by Garth Brooks. "We all loved Aaron, and Aaron loved all of us," Joey said. "He left this world much better than he found it."

Aaron had big plans for his life. He was planning to attend college when he returned from Iraq. He loved to write, and his father believes Aaron would have become an excellent writer. "He had the heart of a poet," his father said. "And he wrote some very good things."

Aaron will never be forgotten. A memorial scholarship has been established in his honor. Family, friends, community members, and complete strangers gave willingly and generously. Almost \$25,000 has been raised, and the first scholarship of \$1,000 was granted last spring to a graduating Southeastern senior.

Aaron's mother Sara also worked to build a Habitat house in his honor and in the honor of Army SPC Gavin Colburn, another Ohioan from Aaron's hometown who also lost his life serving in Iraq. Aaron had told his mother that when he got home, they would volunteer together to help build a Habitat house. After his death, several of Aaron's friends worked with his mother Sara to help his dream become a reality. Fittingly, they decided to name the building Hometown Hero House.

I had the privilege of meeting several of Aaron's family members and friends

at a service held in his honor. Each remembers the beaming, megawatt smile that would always light up Aaron's face. And they will always remember that Aaron died while serving our Nation.

"Aaron believed in what he was doing, which made him my hero," his father Steve said. "Now he's everyone's hero."

Mr. President, 21 years, 11 months, and 11 days was the short time that Aaron lived on this Earth, but we are all better off because of the time he did live. He was a young man who genuinely loved life and had compassion for others. His dedication to his friends, family, community, and country was unmatched. Aaron is a model of what we all hope our children will become.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep the family of Aaron Reed in our thoughts and prayers.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I say to my colleague, Senator DEWINE, those have been very moving tributes to fallen soldiers from his State of Ohio. He has set a good example for all of us on recognizing the service and sacrifice of those from his home State. I find as I listen to those tributes that they are extremely well done. I thank the Senator for that.

I also wish to acknowledge that the Senator from Ohio will be leaving at the end of this term and that I have very much appreciated working with him. He has been one of the very serious Members of this body, and we are going to miss him. I wanted to say to him that I certainly appreciate his service in the Senate. He has always been a constructive colleague, somebody who was working diligently to try to solve problems facing the country. We very much appreciate his dedication to the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and tell him that I have enjoyed working with him very much. We have worked on things together. You can work across the aisle in this body and get things done. I thank him for his very kind and generous words.

#### DISASTER RELIEF FOR FARMERS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, as this interregnum continues, as we wait for some kind of resolution—we were told an hour and a half ago that would be forthcoming in 45 minutes—I wanted to read a letter I received from a young farm family that had been hit by one of the disasters I had referenced earlier. This family is from Souris, ND. It was a letter that was written to me last year about the extraordinary rains. This is what the father of the family wrote:

The rains began in earnest the last days of May 2005. Our crops were in the ground so the majority of the input costs for the crops