

of the armed services feels that he or she received an unfair rating.

Additionally, the bill requires the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to rapidly move to fundamentally change and improve the disability evaluation systems within the two departments.

I am pleased that the legislation will ensure that as policies and programs are developed to improve care and management of wounded soldiers and veterans, that such policies and improvements will apply equally to members of the Active and Reserve components.

The bill also requires that military personnel continue to receive the best possible care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center until equivalent medical facilities are constructed at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD, and the Fort Belvoir, VA, Army Community Hospital—and requires the Department of Defense to study the feasibility of accelerating the relocation of medical capabilities in the National Capital Region required by the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005.

The Senate can be proud that it has put the needs of our wounded warriors first and set forth bipartisan jurisdictional boundaries.

I want to thank my colleagues—especially Senator AKAKA, chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, and Senator CRAIG, the ranking member, for their cooperation, and for the work of both our committee staffs—working together—in the preparation of this legislation.

It is my hope that we will proceed expeditiously to conference with the other body on wounded warrior legislation and promptly resume consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008 when Congress reconvenes in September.

We owe this to our men and women in uniform and their families stationed throughout the world. They deserve nothing less than our full support.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, and with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to proceed on my leader time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

##### SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JASON LEE BISHOP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, most of the men and women who wear our country's uniform would not call themselves heroes, but I am afraid I would have to disagree with that. Those who fight abroad for our freedom here at home are, indeed, heroes. I rise to honor one special Kentuckian among them who was lost to us in the line of duty.

SFC Jason Lee Bishop of Covington, KY, was killed by a car bomb while on patrol operations in Siniya, Iraq, on New Year's Day of 2006. A member of the 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, based in Fort Campbell, KY, he was 31 years old.

For his outstanding service as a soldier in the U.S. Army, SFC Bishop was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart, as well as many other medals and honors of distinction.

Jason was the first of four children born to his parents Frank and Brenda Bishop in the northern Kentucky town of Covington. His mother remembers Jason as a young child standing on the seat in the family car and singing along with the radio, especially to Kenny Rogers.

Riding in the car with his father was a different experience. Frank taught young Jason how to drive by putting him in the driver's seat at the top of a hill, disengaging the parking brake, and issuing one command: "Drive." On a stick shift, no less.

Jason and his dad enjoyed deer hunting and fishing together, something they did whenever the opportunity arose. Playing cards was another way the two enjoyed each other's company. His family says Jason learned to count using playing cards.

Jason graduated from Covington Holmes High School in 1993 with 4 years of junior ROTC experience. He entered the Army immediately upon graduation.

After basic training and assignment at Fort Knox, also in my State of Kentucky, Jason was sent to the Republic of Korea. He also was deployed to Bosnia for a 10-month tour. Later assigned to Fort Campbell back in Kentucky, Jason was promoted to sergeant first class.

Completing Drill Sergeant School was one of SFC Bishop's proudest accomplishments. Earning that drill sergeant badge was physically and mentally grueling, perhaps the toughest of all of his assignments.

Jason became a darn good drill sergeant. A fellow drill sergeant who served with him at Fort Knox, SFC Daniel Webster, says he is not aware of any combat deaths among the 1,000

men Jason trained at Fort Knox—a remarkable record. "There is no doubt in my mind soldiers are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan alive because Jason was so committed to their training," SFC Webster added.

In July of 1999, while stationed at Fort Knox, Jason met the woman he would marry, Katrina Bishop. They took their vows in 2002. "He and I were soulmates," Katrina says.

They had a son, Matthew Franklin Bishop. Only 1½ years old when Jason deployed for the last time, he idolized his father. Matt "quickly became his shadow," Katrina says. "Wherever Daddy was, Matt had to be too."

In September 2005, Jason and his unit deployed to Iraq. They would come home without him in September of 2006.

Jason is loved and remembered by his parents Frank and Brenda Bishop; his sisters Jamie, Lacey, and Julia Bishop; his wife Katrina Bishop; his son Matthew Bishop; his daughter Morgan Bishop, as well as many other beloved family members.

A wall that stands at Fort Knox to honor all of the fallen heroes in Iraq and Afghanistan has been named for the soldier who once served there. It is called "Bishop's Wall of Remembrance."

There is also a Sergeant First Class Jason Bishop Memorial Park at Covington that sits directly across from the house in which Jason grew up.

But the tribute to Sergeant First Class Bishop I can speak to most is this medal.

This medal, this coin was sent to me by Katrina Bishop. The Bishop family had it made in honor of their son. On one side it lists Jason's dates of birth and death, his assignment in the 101st Airborne Division, and his service in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On the other side of the coin it reads: "Sergeant First Class Jason Lee Bishop" and has a picture of his sergeant's stripes. It also lists seven attributes that the Bishop family chose to remember their son, husband, and father by: loyalty, honor, duty, integrity, respect, selfless service, personal courage.

Mr. President, this medal is the Bishop family's reminder of Jason's life, which was tragically ended, and of their love for him, which will never end.

I thank Katrina Bishop for this gift, and I will be honored to keep it in my office. It will serve as a reminder to me, as well, of how much we owe the men and women of our Armed Forces whose highest calling is to fight for the freedom of others.

I ask the Senate to pause for a moment today and hold the family and friends of SFC Jason Lee Bishop in their prayers. They certainly will be in mine.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.