

five amendments, the Republicans would waste one of their chances to change a broken policy by choosing instead to embrace a political stunt.

We are where we are. I vehemently oppose the kind of political abuse of the Senate embodied in the Cornyn amendment, and I am saddened if not surprised to see that so many of the Republicans who believe that what happened to General Petraeus was wrong, could not bring themselves to vote for the Boxer amendment which made clear that the assault on Senator Cleland's patriotism in 2002 was wrong, and that the lies broadcast about my own military record in 2004 were also wrong. The votes against the Boxer amendment—an amendment which makes clear our disagreement with the ad which ran September 10—speak volumes about the partisan motivations behind the Cornyn amendment, and the fact that, apparently, many of our colleagues believe that attacking the integrity of veterans and members of the military is fair game as long as they are Democrats. I would remind them that when you sign up for military duty, no one asks whether you are a Democrat or Republican, liberal, or conservative.

Over the last years, I have defended veterans who have been under assault from any quarters, left or right. I spoke out in 2000 when JOHN MCCAIN's integrity and military record was questioned by the Bush campaign in South Carolina. I spoke out when Max Cleland's patriotism was savaged by people who had never worn the uniform. I defended Jack Murtha when vicious partisans on the right called that decorated marine a "coward." I spoke out when the Bush administration questioned the patriotism of career military men and Generals throughout the war in Iraq, whether it was General Shinseki, or many in uniform who spoke out against Secretary Rumsfeld. I don't reserve my defense of patriotism for Democrats, I defend all who have worn the uniform, whether they agree with me or not. I wish I could say the same for those who brought forward the Cornyn amendment and voted against the Boxer amendment.

This was not a proud day in the Senate, or a high mark in our politics; rather, it was hours lost and time wasted when the Senate should have delivered what all the men and women of the armed forces truly deserve: a policy equal to their sacrifice.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I opposed the amendments offered by Senators CORNYN and BOXER because they were a diversion from the real issue before us; namely, the future of our military involvement in Iraq. I disagreed with the language used in all of the ads addressed in these amendments, but we should not let those ads sidetrack the real work of the Senate. I hope the Senate will not get in the habit of condemning political speech, even speech that is offensive.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business.

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

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, earlier today, the President announced his intention to veto the extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program bill. I believe such a veto would be a terrible mistake.

One of the very first bills I cosponsored when I first came to the Senate was legislation to create the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP as it has become known. It provides health care coverage for children in families where the parents do not have sufficient income to purchase health insurance and are not getting health insurance in the workplace, and yet they make a bit too much money to qualify for coverage under the State's Medicaid program. So these low-income children in working families have been falling through the cracks. That is why this law has been so important.

I remember it well that Senator HATCH, Senator KENNEDY, and Senator ROCKEFELLER all came up to me to enlist my support. I was very eager to sign on as one of the original cosponsors of this law because I knew it could make such a positive difference. Indeed, it has.

Since 1997, the SCHIP program has contributed to a one-third decline in the rate of uninsured low-income children. Today, an estimated 6.6 million children, including more than 14,500 children living in Maine, receive health care coverage through this program. Still, there is more we could do.

While Maine ranks among the top four States in reducing the number of uninsured children, we still have more than 20,000 children in our State who lack coverage. Nationally, about 9 million children remain uninsured. That is why I was so pleased to hear the conferees appeared to be very near to an agreement that is modeled on the legislation that passed the Senate in August with strong bipartisan support, in fact, by a vote of 68 to 31.

Our Senate bill increases funding for the SCHIP program by \$35 million over the next 5 years, a level that is sufficient to maintain coverage for all 6.6 million children currently enrolled, and it would also allow the program to expand to cover an additional 3.3 million low-income children. In Maine, this legislation would allow us to cover an additional 11,000 low-income children who are currently eligible for the SCHIP program but not enrolled.

I urge the administration to take a second look at the Senate bill, the bill that is the basis for the conference agreement. This legislation has made a

real difference in the lives of working families with low-income children across this country. It is helping to ensure these children grow up to be healthy adults. Surely, we can get this done on a bipartisan basis before the program is scheduled to expire on September 30.

I urge the President of the United States to reconsider his threat to veto this vital program, this highly successful program that has a proven track record of reducing the number of children who lack health insurance. If the President does proceed to veto the bill, I will vote to override his veto. Surely, this bill has a track record that has made a real difference to low-income children in working families. We simply cannot allow this program to expire. The extension and expansion we are proposing will enable us to more fully cover these children.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE SHERMAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on Wednesday, September 5, 2007, the State of Nevada and our Nation lost a true hero: Retired U.S. Army Air Corp LTC George Sherman, who served our Nation during World War II as a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen.

Like so many African-American soldiers during that time, Colonel Sherman answered the call to fight for freedom and justice abroad, even when it was categorically denied at home. These men traveled and fought thousands of miles from their families—when every day, their mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers faced injustice at home.

While our Nation can never fully repay the debt to our veterans, in March of this year Congress officially thanked Colonel Sherman and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen for their service to our Nation. Colonel Sherman joined nearly 300 other Tuskegee Airmen in the Capitol Rotunda as thousands watched President Bush and leaders from the House and Senate award them the Congressional Gold Medal.

Colonel Sherman and the Tuskegee Airmen were in prestigious company in receiving the highest honor our Nation can bestow upon private citizens. Other honorees include individuals such as President Harry Truman, Jackie Robinson, Reverend Billy Graham, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to watch Colonel Sherman and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen proudly take their place among all American heroes. Yet in addition to their accomplishments as Tuskegee Airmen, Colonel Sherman and many others continued to serve their country and local communities.

Colonel Sherman had a long record of service to Nevada. After 22 years of military service, he made his home in Las Vegas. Colonel Sherman was a tireless supporter of the Boy Scouts of America, where he earned the highest

honor of the Silver Beaver Award. He was active in the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, which supports achievement in every field of human endeavor. Colonel Sherman also served on the board of directors of the Nevada Black Chamber of Commerce. And he continued to inspire young people to pursue opportunities in aviation though numerous speaking engagements across southern Nevada.

Again, Mr. President, we have lost a true hero. Our thoughts are with his family and loved ones.

TRIBUTES TO RUTH MULAN CHU CHAO

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to remember a woman whose life, to a remarkable degree, traced the very arc of the American dream. Ruth Mulan Chu Chao returned home to the Lord on August 2, 2007, and today is the Seventh Seventh Day of her departure, an important day in Chinese tradition.

The story of her struggle to bring hope and opportunity to a family that had verged on losing both is an inspiration to all who knew her. On August 11, 2007, I had the honor of retelling my mother-in-law's life story at a private celebration of life and thanksgiving service in New York City that was attended by her many family, friends, admirers, and acquaintances.

It is my hope that by preserving my tribute, along with that of my wife, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, that the memory of this remarkable woman will live on not only for the benefit of those who knew her but for all who cherish the promise of America. May its placement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD serve as a lasting tribute to the millions of men and women who, like Ruth Mulan Chu Chao, struggled to see that promise fulfilled. Ruth's story is the story of America. It deserves to be heard.

I ask unanimous consent that my tribute and that of Secretary Elaine Chao be printed in the RECORD.

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

TRIBUTE BY SENATOR McCONNELL

Sophocles said that "One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been." And we could say the same thing about the modest woman we mourn today. Ruth Chao put the lives of others ahead of her own for as long as anyone could remember. And, in the end, we all knew that this was the secret of her truly remarkable life.

As a young girl, she was torn from the beauty of her native home by an invading army, then secretly returned at great risk to herself to retrieve the family's belongings. As a young wife and mother, she was separated from her husband for three years, but consoled him with letters of encouragement, optimism, and hope. And as a loving mother of six daughters, she would diligently devote the rest of her years to them.

She had been at sea for more than a month in the summer of 1961 when she leaned over the rail toward the giant woman in New York harbor, and prayed that her family would be safe in this new and foreign place.

There was no guarantee that the journey would end well. But in the years to come, Ruth Chao would quietly do all she could to ensure that her family lived up to the promise of America.

The cultural divide was as wide as the ocean that brought them here. One early shock came at the end of October, when a group of children showed up at the front door with masks on their faces. The neighbors knew it was Halloween. The Chao family thought they were being robbed. Most of the cultural difficulties were harder to bear. But they made it through. They had their anchor. It was Ruth.

In time, the family would learn the language and the culture. The daughters would go on to the best universities in the country, and anyone who visited the house in Harrison would learn the wisdom of the Chinese Proverb which says that "Those who plant melons grow melons; those who plant beans produce beans." Ruth's devotion to her husband and her daughters was complete and total. And it showed.

She was never more herself than when she fell ill. She said that if someone in the family had to be sick, better that it be her. She had fewer responsibilities than the others, she said. It was an astonishing thing to hear. But it didn't surprise anyone who knew her. From the shadow of the Purple Mountain of Nanjing, to the bitterness of exile, to the uncertainty of a new life in a strange place, to the heartbreak of a long illness, she put herself last so that others might be first.

The Scriptures that she loved tell us that "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Ruth Chao made this promise her own. She left this life as she lived it, giving of herself, even at the end, for others. And all of us are grateful for the harvest that she reaped.

TRIBUTE BY SECRETARY CHAO

My father, Dr. James S. C. Chao; sisters: Jeanette, May, Christine, Grace, Angela; the rest of our family, and I want to thank you so much—especially those who have traveled so far—for coming and helping us celebrate the life and legacy of our beloved mother, Ruth Mulan Chu Chao.

My mother is a modest and humble person who never wanted to trouble anyone. We did not notify many people formally but the volume of condolence wishes have been so spontaneous, heartfelt, and overwhelming. We are very touched.

Mother went home to the Lord a week ago last Thursday, after a heroic seven-year battle with lymphoma. In fact, her initial diagnosis came on the same day that the President announced my nomination as the Secretary of Labor. Our mother confronted this struggle as she did every challenge in her life—with courage, selfless concern for others, and a serenity that came from the belief that God had a purpose for her in life.

She and my father are part of a generation that experienced much suffering, but achieved great things. Mother and Father, like so many Chinese in the 20th century, endured the terror of foreign invasions, the chaos of domestic turmoil, and the heartbreak of dislocations in their native land. Despite all the terrible things they saw, they refused to be defeated by them and remained positive and optimistic their entire life.

Mother's courage in the face of great suffering was the product of a strong faith, rooted in a deep love for the Lord, her husband and her family. It gave her the strength to be a pioneer for women of her generation, and to leave a legacy that extends far beyond her immediate family.

Mother was ahead of her time even as a young woman, when she saw the promise of

her future husband, James S. C. Chao, long before others, and pledged her love and her life to him unconditionally. Her American name, Ruth, which was given to her by a missionary, is very appropriate because—as the Biblical Ruth promised in Chapter 1:16—"whither thou goest, I will go."

For my father's part, her graceful bearing, dignity, cultured upbringing and beauty ensured that his heart was hers forever. As Proverbs 31:10-12 say, "When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good . . . all the days of her life."

Mother's virtuous character was the foundation of our family and all that we have been able to achieve. Her loving, steady leadership at home alleviated all of Father's worries and enabled him to travel far and wide to seek opportunities to better life for the family. Mother was seven months pregnant with my sister, May, when Father left to go to America. During their three long years of separation, they were faithful to one another, to God and to every promise that they made.

Three years later, Mother risked everything, leaving her family and all that was familiar behind to join him, taking another great leap of faith. Moving to America may seem more commonplace now, but back then it was a courageous and bold step, especially because America was not nearly as ethnically diverse as it is today. Mother was a pioneer who led the way for those who came afterwards, and their contributions helped our country grow in the diversity and strength that makes it the envy of the world today.

Resettled in America, Mother paved the way for her daughters' successes by nurturing us physically and imbuing us with thinking and attitudes that were, again, ahead of their time. Mother always believed that women could be just as valued and accomplished as men. She also believed that the most important adornments for a woman were virtue, intellect and achievement. In fact, at the age of 51, she went back to school to St. John's University to earn a master's degree in Asian literature and history. She taught us to lead virtuous lives by her own example of being virtuous in everything she did and said. She is our model of dignity, propriety and purity of heart.

Mother gave expression to her strong faith and love not only through the example she set for us, but in giving herself wholeheartedly to her church and to her community. She touched the lives of many outside our family through her volunteer work in the church and in the community, often done quietly and without fanfare.

Mother's life spanned two worlds—Asia and America—and she played a role in building bridges of understanding between them. She never forgot where she came from, establishing several charitable foundations with Father that are helping young people in Asia and America access higher education and opportunity. She has planted thousands of seeds throughout her life that will blossom over time and produce many improvements in our world in the future.

As Mother faced the final challenge of her life, she never complained even though the ravages of the illness ensured that she was never without pain. Her only thoughts and words were always expressions of concern for others. When I would accompany her in the hospital, she would look quizzically at me and ask, "Shouldn't you be at work? The people and the country are depending on you."

During her illness, my parents switched roles. Mother had taken care of Father throughout her life. Now, he took care of