

Forces soldiers I know are the pride of our country. All at once, they are soldiers, intelligence officers, diplomats, tacticians, linguists, trainers, and advisors. They are at the tip of the spear of our national defense. The Green Beret that they wear, said President Kennedy, is “a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage, a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom.”

Sergeant Whiting was on his third tour in Iraq, on a mission to help bring security and stability to a region torn by violence and tragedy. Every day, he and his unit put themselves in harm's way to give Iraqi citizens a chance at a society governed by the rule of law, free from the threats of sectarian strife, terrorism, or autocratic rule. He served bravely and was highly decorated. Among many other honors, he earned the Bronze Star, one of the highest awards given for combat service, for his bravery and selflessness.

For those of us who did not know Justin personally, it is difficult to know what inspired his extraordinary sense of duty or what fueled his courage on the battlefield. Alexander Hamilton, a Founding Father and an Army officer, explained that “There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty that makes human nature rise above itself in acts of bravery and heroism.” I imagine that Justin found his strength in many sources—friends, family, and fellow soldiers—but I imagine that he, too, was motivated by an enthusiasm for liberty and a passion for justice. In his life, he consistently chose the path that was most challenging so that he could offer our country his highest service. He was a true patriot.

To Justin's mother, Estelline, to his father, Randall, to his sister, Amanda, and to his brother, Nathan, our thoughts and prayers are with you. I hope that in time, your grief will be assuaged by the pride you must feel in Justin's service and by the honor he bestowed upon his country. May we never forget his service and his sacrifice.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and withdrawals which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2556. A bill to extend the provisions of the Protect America Act of 2007 for an additional 30 days.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2557. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4773. A communication from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Premium Rates; Payment of Premiums; Flat Premium Rates, Variable Rate Premium Cap, and Termination Premium; Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; Pension Protection Act of 2006” (RIN1212-AB10) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4774. A communication from the Deputy Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits” (72 FR 71071) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4775. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Amendment to the Current Good Manufacturing Practice Regulations for Finished Pharmaceuticals” (Docket No. 2007N-0280) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4776. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Over-the-Counter Vaginal Contraceptive and Spermicide Drug Products Containing Nonoxonyl 9; Required Labeling” (RIN0910-AF44) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4777. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Medical Devices; Hematology and Pathology Devices: Reclassification of Automated Blood Cell Separator Device Operating by Centrifugal Separation Principle” (Docket No. 2005N-0017) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4778. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Secondary Direct Food Additives Permitted in Food for Human Consumption” (Docket No. 2006F-0409) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4779. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Direct

Grant Programs” (RIN1890-AA15) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4780. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program for fiscal year 2006; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4781. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4782. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4783. A communication from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Department's Inspector General for the period of April 1, 2007, through September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4784. A communication from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period ending September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4785. A communication from the Inspector General, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report for the period ending September 30, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4786. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the competitive sourcing efforts of fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4787. A communication from the Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4788. A communication from the Executive Director, Morris K. Udall Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Foundation's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4789. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-227, “Department of Health Care Finance Establishment Act of 2007” received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4790. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-236, “Arbitration Act of 2007” received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4791. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-237, “Multi-Unit Real Estate Tax Rate Clarification Act of 2007” received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4792. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia,