

of a Senate resolution designating a week in May as National Substitute Teacher Recognition Week. For helping me to pass this simple resolution, I am grateful to Senator Clinton. More importantly, however, I am grateful that Senator Clinton was more interested in doing what was right for substitute teachers across our Nation. Even though this resolution probably never made a headline, Senator Clinton was one of the first in line to sign on as a cosponsor because she knew it was the least we could do for men and women across our country who give so much to our children through their education.

In closing, I share these two examples simply to illustrate the skill and compassion that defined Senator Clinton's service while she was here in the Senate. From the large legislative issues to the small acts of kindness and recognition, I know that Senator Clinton strived to do what she thought was right and what was best for our country. It is this example that we will all miss in the Senate as she begins the next chapter of her service at the State Department. Truly, their gain is our loss, yet it is without hesitation that I extend my deepest gratitude to Senator Clinton for her countless hours of service, her incredible example of compassion, and the years of friendship that she has extended to me, my colleagues, and the people of the United States. I am excited for what the future holds for Senator Clinton. I am certain that many great things still lie ahead in this next chapter of her life, and it is to Senator Clinton that I extend my congratulations as she begins her journey at the State Department.

KEN SALAZAR

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the resignation of the distinguished Senator from Colorado, Mr. Salazar in order to undertake the duties and responsibilities of Secretary of the Interior, has left us with a sense of pride and loss. We are very pleased the Department of the Interior will have the benefit of his leadership, but we regret that he will not be able to continue his excellent record of distinguished service in this body.

It has been a personal pleasure to serve with my friend from Colorado. His warm personality and his seriousness of purpose as a Senator have enabled him to serve as a very successful U.S. Senator.

I wish my friend well as he undertakes his new duties. I am sure we will see him often in the Senate working with us as we support him and the Department in carrying out their important responsibilities.

EXECUTIVE ORDER CLOSING DETENTION FACILITIES

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I once again come to the floor to discuss an issue that goes directly to who we are as a country and what we stand for.

Specifically, I want to comment on the executive orders President Obama

signed today to close the Guantánamo Bay detention facility within a year, close secret prisons operated by the CIA, and review the procedures for detaining and trying accused terrorists. In so doing, he sends a long-overdue message not only to the world, but also to the American people here at home, reaffirming our values as Americans and our commitment to the rule of law.

As we speak, some 245 individuals are still being held as enemy combatants at Guantánamo Bay, and about 100 in secret prisons around the world, though we do not even know for sure. Several independent sources have alleged that these detainees have suffered from abuse.

All of the information we have indicates that most, if not all, of these people have engaged in a host of violent actions directed at the United States. They are not misguided innocents, but rather men committed to harming us. I rise today not to defend them and their actions in any way; they must be punished to the full extent of the law.

Rather, I rise to urge exactly that, the application of our great body of law for dealing with dangerous people intent on harming us. Indeed, some in our Government have failed to apply the law and failed to obey it.

According to a Red Cross report, prisoners in Guantánamo Bay were subjected to "cruel, inhumane and degrading" treatment that is "tantamount to torture." FBI agents have reported that many of those held at Guantánamo Bay were chained to the floor in a fetal position for 18 hours or more, and were subject to 100-degree heat and freezing cold. The CIA's secret facilities have never been inspected, so we don't know how prisoners have been treated in them.

These abuses are not just morally wrong, they are violations of American and international law. They weaken respect for the rule of law abroad and subject American citizens to greater risks of unlawful detention and torture in foreign countries. And they weaken our security even as they undermine our democratic ideals.

Guantánamo and the CIA's secret prisons has been an international embarrassment, a symbol of abuse and the breakdown of law, which is why I and others have come to this floor so often to discuss our moral responsibility to close them.

To be absolutely clear, I repeat that those who are a threat to America, who are guilty of crimes, must and will be punished to the fullest extent of the law. They must be tried and prosecuted. This decision is not about protecting those who wish to harm us.

Rather, this decision says, as President Obama did in his inaugural address this week, that the choice between security and liberty is a false choice, and we reject it.

As General George Washington answered when his soldiers asked him for permission to beat their prisoners, "Treat them with humanity. Let them

have no reason to complain of our copying the brutal example" of our enemies.

And so, I am grateful and relieved that President Obama has acted so quickly to remedy this very damaging policy.

This is, of course, only the first step. We must remain vigilant in working with the administration to implement these orders. And there remain many issues to be decided, from when and how Guantánamo and other detention facilities are closed to ensuring the interrogation methods employed by U.S. personnel never again cross the line into torture.

But this is a critical first step toward restoring not only the rule of law and our Constitution but also our moral authority. Today, we remind the world and ourselves that everyone is subject to the law and no one, not you, not I, stands above it.

I am convinced that today's orders will better secure our Nation and allow us to more effectively prevent, detain, and prosecute those who would seek to harm us.

I applaud President Obama for his decision to act without delay on these most important issues.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, from the start of his transition to the White House, I have urged President Obama to make a clear commitment to open government. By issuing his directive to strengthen one of our Nation's most important open government laws, the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, the President is turning the page and moving away from the overreaching secrecy of the last administration. I commend President Obama for recognizing that our Government is accountable to the people it represents. I also commend the President for taking immediate steps during his first full days in office to send this important message to the American people.

I was delighted with the answer of the President's nominee to be the next Attorney General of the United States, Eric Holder, when I asked him at his confirmation hearing last week about how he intended to implement the Freedom of Information Act. He, too, believes that the presumption should be toward disclosure and openness. In fact, that was the policy before Attorney General Ashcroft reversed it.

Today, our Government is more open and accountable to the American people than it was just a few weeks ago. With the President's new FOIA memorandum, the implementation of the first major reforms to FOIA in more than a decade in the Leahy-Cornyn OPEN Government Act, and the nomination of Eric H. Holder Jr., to be the Attorney General of the United States, the American people have more openness and accountability regarding the activities of the executive branch. I am pleased that the President also issued a