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Arabs are welcome in all segments of Israel’s political life.
Mr. Barak is a true son of Israel and a worthy leader of the only democracy in the Middle East. Born on a Kibbutz six years before Israel’s independence, he has served his country well as its most decorated soldier, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Member of the Knesset, Minister of the Interior and Foreign Minister.

After the polls closed on May 17th, when it was clear that he had been elected, Mr. Barak traveled to Rabin Square in the center of Tel Aviv. Standing just feet from the spot where an assassin’s bullet struck Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin three and a half years ago, the Prime Minister-elect renewed his commitment to the Peace Process Prime Minister Rabin courageously began. It was a fitting tribute to Israel’s fallen leader.

Making peace is not an easy endeavor. Indeed, it is often more difficult to make peace than to wage war. As Prime Minister Rabin often said, one does not make peace with one’s enemies; one makes peace with one’s enemies. Barak, like Rabin, has proven himself a great general on the battlefield. Now he must prove himself worthy of the even more exalted title of peacemaker.

I am confident that Ehud Barak will indeed earn that title, making Israel’s second fifty-years devoid of the wars which characterized its first fifty years.

Mr. President, the United States is one of Israel’s closest allies. Under the stewardship of Mr. Barak, I am confident that relationship will only grow stronger. I look forward to a close collaboration between our two nations on issues ranging from security to trade. Most importantly, however, is the struggle for peace in a region which has seen far too many wars.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE
Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I received a very touching letter from a Vietnam Veteran from my state, who was recently awarded the Silver Star for his bravery during the Vietnam Conflict.

Helping Al Myers get that Silver Star and the recognition he deserved for so long was a very rewarding experience. Al sent me this letter. It is a fictional remembrance of a soldier who’s name is on the Vietnam Memorial.

The letter defines the importance of paying tribute to our nation’s honored soldiers who have fought for, won, and kept our freedom, whether that tribute comes in the form of our nation building a great “Black Granite Wall,” or simply a family member putting flowers on a beloved white tombstone at a veteran’s cemetery. It exemplifies the strength, dedication, and sacrifice our nation’s military men and women, and their families, make. We are forever indebted to them, and it fills me with great pride and humility to honor those who have distinguished sacrifice to preserve our way of life as Americans.

I thought it was very important to read it in honor of the Memorial Day Observance on Monday. It touched my heart, and I want to share it here on the Floor today. It is called “The Wall From the Other Side.”

THE WALL FROM THE OTHER SIDE
(Pat Camunes)

At first there was no place for us to go until someone put up that “Black Granite Wall.” Now, every day and night, my Brothers and Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this “Wall.” Many people stopping briefly and many for hours and some that come on a regular basis. It was hard at first, not that it’s gotten any easier, but it seems that many of the attitudes towards that Vietnam War we were involved in have changed. And the ones on the other side have learned something, and more “Walls” as this one, needn’t be in our future.

Several members of my unit, and many that I did not recognize, have called me to The Wall by touching my name engraved upon it. The tears aren’t necessary, but are hard even for me to hold back. Don’t feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers. This was my destiny as it is yours to be on that side of The Wall. Touch The Wall, my Brothers, and let those eyes and hand be reminders of how we had together. Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me, not to say Good-bye but to say Hello and be together again . . . even for a short time . . . and to ease that pain of loss that we all still share.

Today, an irresistible and loving call summons me to The Wall. As I approach, I can see an elderly lady . . . and as I get closer I recognize her—It’s Momma! As much as I have looked forward to this day, I have also dreaded it, because I didn’t know what reaction I would have.

Next to her, I suddenly see my wife and immediately think how hard it must have been for her to come to this place, and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 30 years past. There’s a young man in a military uniform standing with his arm around her—My God—he has to be my son! Look at him trying to be the man without a tear in his eye. I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him stand tall, straight and proud in his uniform.

Momma comes closer and touches The Wall, and I feel the soft and gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad has crossed to this side of The Wall, and through our tears we touch. I tell her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer suffering or feeling pain. I see my wife’s courage building as she sees Momma touch The Wall and she approaches and looks at my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings and memories of three decades past flash between our touch and I tell her that . . . it’s all right honey. I don’t want you to worry about me . . . I can see as I look into her eyes that she hears and a big burden has been lifted from her on wings of understanding.

I watch as they lay flowers and other memories of my past. My lucky charm that was taken from me and sent to her by my CO is a tattered and worn teddy bear that I can barely remember having as I grew up as a child . . . and several medals that I had earned and were presented to my wife. One is the Combat Infantryman Badge, a very proud of, and I notice that my son is also wearing this medal. I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam and he had probably earned his in the deserts of Iraq.

I can tell that they are preparing to leave, and I try to take a mental picture of them together, because I don’t know when I will see them again. I wouldn’t blame them if they were not to return, and can only thank them that I was not forgotten. My wife and Momma near The Wall for one final touch, and so many years of indecision, fear and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave, I feel my tears that had not flowed for so many years, form as if dew drops on the other side of The Wall.

They slowly move away with only a glance over their shoulders. My son suddenly stops and slowly returns. He stands straight and proud in front of me and snaps a salute. Something draws him near The Wall and he touches his knee and the tears flow from his eyes and I try my best to reassure him that it’s all right, and the tears do not make him any less of a man. As he moves back wiping the tears from his eyes, he silently mouths, “God Bless you, Dad . . . God Bless You, Son . . . we will meet someday, but in the meanwhile go on your way . . . there is no hurry at all.

As I see them walk off in the distance, I yell loud to Them and Everyone there today, as loud as I can: Thank You For Remembering . . . Thank You All For Remembering . . . and as others on this side of The Wall join in, I notice the U.S. Flag, Old Glory, that so proudly flies in front of us every day, is flapping and standing proudly straight out in the strong winds that number this day . . . and I shout again, and again . . . and again . . .

Thanks for Remembering! Thanks for Remembering! Thanks for Remembering!

THE CONTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS TO AMERICA’S ARMED FORCES

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, with Memorial Day soon upon us, I wanted to share with my colleagues some of the testimony from yesterday’s Senate Immigration Subcommittee hearing on “The Contribution of Immigrants to America’s Armed Forces.” It featured some dramatic testimony from both immigrants and native-born individuals.

Let me begin by quoting the testimony of Elmer Compton, a native of Indiana who served in Vietnam.

Mr. Compton’s experience and the actions of America’s Armed Forces on that day, I believe saved my life, as well as other members of my team.

On March 16, 1966, Al Rascon was with the Recon Platoon on a search and destroy mission known as Operation Silver City. My
Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today to talk about immigrant contributions to America's Armed Forces and our national defense. I'd like to share with you a few thoughts on how I became an American and why I joined the United States Navy.

I was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala on 24 January 1960 and immigrated to the United States with my family in 1970. My mother, three brothers and one sister lived outside of Boston in Milford, Massachusetts. In 1973, I moved to East Douglas and attended Douglas High School. I am proud to say I graduated in 1990 with high honors.

After having the opportunity to meet so many shipmates over the course of my career, I can honestly say that the contribution of immigrants to America's Armed Forces has never been more fully measured. These Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, have given and will continue to give because of their deep appreciation and dedication to the United States. They know, first hand, of the sacrifices made by these and other immigrants so that we might have more. We are fortunate and we are forever indebted to those who have gone before.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the U.S. Armed Services. Generally presented to its recipient by the President in the name of Congress, it is often called the Congressional Medal of Honor. In 1861, Congress established the Medal of Honor Society to perpetuate and uphold the integrity of the Medal of Honor and to help its recipients. In 1867, Congress passed legislation, later signed by President Eisenhower, that incorporated the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

A review of the records shows that 715 of the 3,410 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients—approximately 21 percent—have been immigrants. I would like to share the stories of some of these individuals so the committee can better understand the sacrifices made by these and other immigrants.

Lewis Albanese, an immigrant from Italy served during the Vietnam War as a private first class in the U.S. Army. On December 1, 1966, Albanese's platoon advanced through dense terrain. At close range, enemy soldiers fired automatic weapons. Albanese was assigned the task of providing security for the platoon's left flank so it could move forward. Suddenly, an enemy in a concealed ditch opened fire on the left flank. Realizing his fellow soldiers were in danger, Albanese fixed his bayonet, plunged into the ditch and silenced the sniper fire. This allowed the platoon to advance in safety toward the main enemy position.

The ditch that Lewis Albanese had entered was filled with a complex of defenses designed to inflict heavy damage on anyone who attempted to move. As the main portion of the platoon crossed the ditch, several members of the platoon heard heavy firing from the ditch and some of them saw what happened next: Albanese moved 100 meters along the ditch and killed six snipers, each of whom were armed with automatic weapons. But soon, Albanese, out of ammunition, was forced to engage in hand-to-hand combat with eight Vietnamese soldiers. He killed two of them. But he was mortally wounded in the attack.

This statement of Paul Bucha, president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and I have asked Charles MacGillivray, a past president of the society, to present my testimony. I want to thank you Senator Abraham Ham for holding this hearing and, more importantly, for displaying leadership on the immigration issue and reminding us of America's great tradition as a nation of immigrants.

Let me state my position clearly: All of us owe our freedom and our prosperity to the sacrifices of immigrants. We, therefore, owe ourselves so that we might have more. We are fortunate and we are forever indebted to those who have gone before.

The Medal of Honor for valor in action against an enemy force which can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the U.S. Armed Services.

Mr. Bucha testified, Honor Society, also included some...
“His unparalleled action saved the lives of many wounded American soldiers. As the platoon who otherwise would have fallen to the sniper fire,” reads the official citation. “Private First Class Albanese’s extraordinary heroism and supreme devotion to duty in a situation that was certain to menace with the finest traditions of the military service and remain a tribute to himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.” Lewis Albanese posthumously received the Medal of Honor.

Mexican-born immigrant Marcoario Garcia was acting squad leader of Company B (22nd Infantry) near Grosshau, Germany during World War II. Garcia was wounded and in pain when he found his company pinned down by the heavy machine gun fire of Nazi troops and by an artillery and mortar barrage. Garcia crawled forward up to one of the enemy’s positions and fired shots into the enemy’s emplacement, singlehandedly assaulted the position, and destroyed the gun, killing three German soldiers.

Shortly after after his company, another German machine gun started firing. Garcia returned to the German position and again singlehandedly stormed the enemy, destroying three more German soldiers, and capturing four prisoners.

Finally, Lieutenant John Koelsch was a London-born immigrant who flew a helicopter. He was in command of a four-man helicopter crew which was shot down by ground fire during the Korean War. On July 3, 1951, he received word that the North Koreans had shot down a U.S. marine aviator and had him trapped in the hostile territory. The terrain was mountainous and it was growing dark. John Koelsch volunteered to rescue him.

Koelsch’s aircraft was unarmed and due to the overcast and low altitude he flew without a fighter escort. He flew as he descended beneath the clouds to search for the downed aviator.

After being hit, Koelsch kept flying until he located the downed pilot, who had suffered serious burns. While the injured pilot was being hoisted up, a burst of enemy fire hit the helicopter, causing it to crash into the side of the mountain. Koelsch helped his crew and the downed pilot out of the wreckage, and led the men out of the area just ahead of the North Koreans. With the leading them, they spent nine days on the run evading the North Koreans and caring for the burned pilot. Finally, the North Koreans captured Koelsch and his men.

“His great personal valor and heroic spirit of self-sacrifice throughout sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service,” his citation for the Medal of Honor reads. That self-sacrifice, the citation notes, included the inspiration of other prisoners of war, for during the interrogation he “refused to aid his captors in any manner” and died in the hands of the North Koreans.

These and other immigrant Medal of Honor recipients tell the story not only of America’s wars but of America’s people. After all, we must never forget that all of us are either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

Tens of thousands of immigrants and hundreds of their children and grandchildren have died in combat fighting for America. I put to you that there is a standard, a basic standard, by which to judge whether America is correct to maintain a generous legal immigration policy: Have immigrants and their children and grandchildren been willing to fight and die for the United States of America? The answer—right up to the present day—remains a resounding “yes.”

**Detroit Free Press Article on Gun-Related Prosecutions**

**Mr. ABRAHAM.** Mr. President, I rise today to call attention to a Detroit Free Press article that appeared on Tuesday of this week, entitled, “Federal gun cases decrease: Decline in Michigan greater than in U.S.” This article notes that from 1993 to 1997, there has been a very significant decline in the number of gun prosecutions brought in Detroit.

Mr. President, over the last two weeks, we in this body engaged in lengthy debate on the question of how effective or useful different proposals to regulate firearms were likely to be in stemming violent crime, most especially juvenile crime. I supported some of the proposals and opposed others. This article sheds some light on another important point raised in this debate: no matter what laws this Congress passes, their effect on violent crime will almost certainly be negligible if the Administration is not willing to prosecute violent criminals. Unfortunately, the Free Press article provides little ground for optimism on this score.

According to the Free Press, between 1993 and 1997 the number of people prosecuted in Detroit in cases investigated by the BATF dropped by 55%, compared with a 36% drop nationally. The Free Press also reports that there has been a nearly 50% decrease in prosecutions involving the three largest categories of federal gun laws, from 221 to 112, respectively.

When asked about this, U.S. Attorney Saul Green of Detroit reportedly stated that the decrease in prosecutions in the Eastern District of Michigan follows a downward trend in crimes. In fact, however, while there has been some improvement on that score, Detroit’s violent crime rate has been falling significantly less than that of most major cities, and it remains unacceptably high. Meanwhile, the much more dramatic decline of violent crime in Richmond, Virginia, where federal officials have pursued a policy of vigorous prosecution of gun offenders, strongly suggests that if the Administration were following the same course in Detroit, we would be doing better.

As the Detroit Free Press article points out, police records show that there were 559 murders in Detroit in 1993, compared to 453 in 1998. But that still left Detroit with the highest murder rate per capita for cities with a population of approximately one million, one of the six highest among the U.S.’s 226 largest cities.

Moreover, while in 1998 the rate of reported violent crimes decreased 6% nationally, in Detroit it actually increased by 13%, according to FBI figures. Nor is this simply a one-year anomaly. In 1997, the number of murders in Detroit increased by 9% from 1996 and Detroit’s murder rate ranked 5th worst among the U.S.’s 225 largest cities.

Meanwhile, our nation’s serious crime decreased by only 1%, compared to a 3.2% decrease nationally. Similarly, in 1996, Detroit’s rate of violent crimes decreased by only 3%, compared to a 7% decrease nationally.

Nor is Detroit’s relatively small numerical improvement explained by the fact that it is a major metropolitan area. To the contrary, it is mostly the biggest cities, like New York, that have seen the largest drops in crime rates over the past few years.

The fact that Detroit is lagging behind the nation’s improving violent crime rates, along with the fact that it is continually among nation’s 5-7 worst cities with respect to its homicide rate, clearly indicates that this is no time for Congress to relax its gun control laws, the federal government, to be relaxing our crime-fighting efforts. Meanwhile, recent data from Richmond, Virginia’s Project EXILE strongly suggest that aggressive prosecution and severe punishment of gun law violators would be of major help. In 1998, the year following the implementation of Project EXILE in Richmond, the homicide rate in Richmond decreased by approximately 1/3. The rate of firearm-related homicides in Richmond dropped even more—66%, from 122 in 1997 to 78 in 1998.

This takes me back to where I started. I voted in favor of several of the measures the Senate adopted last week because I believe that they can be useful tools in stopping gun violence. But quite simply, no gun laws, either those currently on the books or any new ones that Congress may enact, can be effective if the Attorney General does not enforce them through aggressive prosecution and severe punishment. The Detroit Free Press article of two days ago confirms that right now, both in Detroit and nationally, aggressive prosecution is not what we are seeing. For our children’s sake, it is high time for it to begin.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the Detroit Free Press article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD without further delay.

**Federal Gun Cases Decrease**

Decline in Michigan greater than in U.S.

By Tim Doran


The number of people prosecuted in cases investigated by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms plummeted 56 percent nationally, but were down 36 percent, according to data analyzed by the Free Press.

For the three largest categories of gun law violations, the number of people prosecuted in eastern Michigan dropped from 221 in 1993 to 112 in 1997.