HONORING THE BRAVERY OF MISSOURI TASK FORCE ONE

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Madam President, during the course of the past week, we have witnessed extraordinary acts of bravery. Americans from all walks of life have reached deep into their souls and sought to bring forth comfort to those whose lives have been turned upside down by the unimaginable. Their efforts range from simple acts of kindness to the emotionally numbing tasks of searching through the aftermath for survivors. Today I rise to applaud the efforts of a special team of Americans, Missouri Task Force One.

Created in the early ’80s by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the philosophy behind urban search and rescue was to compile a team of highly trained and motivated rescue professionals who could find and return people in collapsed buildings. This past week the 62 volunteers that make up Missouri Task Force One have used the full range of their skills in the New York City rescue mission. Searchers work in 12-hour shifts. They search around the clock. The effort is slow and methodical and emotions run high. “It’s sensory overload in every aspect,” said team member Doug Waras, a firefighter from St. Louis. “You descend the first flight of stairs, you pass through the ranks. You must find a way to distinguish them as they face, they must be forced to stop and eat. When the shift is over, they are reluctant to stop. They are...
driven by an inner force they find hard to explain.

Their job is as difficult and challenging as perhaps any task that has been undertaken since the attack, and their focus remains true. As the days and weeks progress and the chances of finding survivors wane, they press on, their hope and determination strong.

On behalf of all Missourians I express my sincere and heartfelt appreciation to the heroes and heroines who make up Missouri Task Force One. They are shining examples of the best Missouri has to offer and an inspiration to the world.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred November 30, 1993 in Tyler, TX. Nicholas West, a 23-year-old gay man, was abducted from a park known as a meeting place for gays, robbed and shot to death. Donald Aldrich, 29, David Ray McMillan, 17, and Henry Dunn Jr., 19, were charged with murder.

I believe that government’s first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

IN MEMORY OF TWO BRAVE CALIFORNIA PILOTS, LARRY GROFF AND LARS STRATTE

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate the tragic deaths of Larry Groff and Lars Stratte, pilots who were killed on August 27, 2001 in a mid-air tanker collision while fighting the Bus Fire in Northern California. Both pilots were flying Grumman S-2 aircraft and were making fire retardant drops on the fire when they collided.

Larry Groff and Lars Stratte were established and dedicated pilots who have recorded numerous hours of flying time. Both pilots were employees of the San Jose-based Bruce Vento Hmong Veterans Naturalization Extension Act of 2001. This important piece of legislation will ensure that the sizable Hmong population in Wisconsin is able to take advantage of a status adjustment opportunity extended to them unanimously by this Congress last year. The Hmong, and particularly the Lao Veterans of America, deserve our respect and honor for all their help during the conflict in Vietnam.

The Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000 waives the English language requirement and provides for a translator during administration of the Civics test for all Hmong Veterans of the Southeast Asian Wars and their spouses and widows applying for U.S. citizenship. However, the Hmong veteran community only had the benefit of this legislation for 18 months. Since enactment, fewer than half of all Hmong veterans and their family members have been able to seek citizenship under these standards. The legislation introduced today would give those eligible an additional 18 months to apply for citizenship under the Naturalization Act.

I commend my colleague Senator SMITH for his efforts on behalf of the Hmong population living in the upper midwestern United States, and I urge expeditious consideration of this legislation.

CONDEMNING BIGOTRY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST ARAB, MUSLIM AND SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, I rise to join with my colleagues in support of H. Con. Res 227 condemning bigotry and violence against Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Americans.

I am sincerely grateful for and proud of the tremendous response of the American people who have shown true courage and loyalty in the face of the horrific attacks on our country on September 11, 2001. No one should doubt the resolve of this Nation to meet the challenge before us in fighting terrorism. But as we continue to wrestle with deep and conflicting emotions of sadness, pain, anger, and fear, we must ensure that the spirit of America, that ability to transcend differences in race, religion, and ethnicity to achieve greatness, is not only preserved, but strengthened as a result of this tragedy.

As history has shown, America has always triumphed when we are united. That is why it is so important in this chapter in our history, as we prepare to defend and preserve our Nation, that we be united as one Nation. This should not be an occasion for irrational impulses of fear, hate or violence towards Arab-Americans, Muslim Americans, South Asian Americans, or any other person in this country. Such actions are wrong. The idea of ‘America’ knows no racial, ethnic, or religious boundaries, and no American should have to live in fear as a result of this situation. I stand together with my colleagues, and with Americans of all backgrounds, in condemning such actions. We must renew our commitment to protect our fellow Americans and our Nation against those who want to divide us with hate.

Unfortunately, there has been a rash of hate crimes, compounding the anxiety of Americans in communities throughout this Nation. I have been saddened to hear of incidents in my own State. Ashraf ‘Mike’ Khaled, a Wisconsin resident of Jordanian descent and gas station owner, has been the victim of several incidents of hateful statements and threats of his safety by customers and