

training battalion he successfully completed Infantry One Station Unit Training, which combines in one location basic training with advanced individual training. Upon graduation, he left for assignment in June 2005 with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Fort Drum, NY, where he served as an infantryman. On August 11, 2005, he deployed with his unit to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Tragically, on May 18, 2006, this brave 25-year-old soldier was killed in action along with three of his comrades and an interpreter when an improvised explosive device explosion detonated near their military vehicle during combat operations in the vicinity of Baghdad in Iraq. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Weapons Qualification Badge.

Patriots from the State of New Hampshire have served our Nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill to Baghdad—and Nick served in that—fine tradition. Daniel Webster said, “God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it.” Nick was a courageous and dedicated volunteer who loved his family and his country and was proud of being a soldier. He served honorably doing the job he wanted to do. This generous, fun-loving young man had a big heart and understood that the freedoms and opportunities provided by this Nation need continuous defense and that they are among the most precious gifts he can give to his family and loved ones.

My heartfelt sympathy, condolences, and prayers go out to Nick’s parents, Denis and Lenda, his sister Natalie, and his family and friends who have suffered this grievous loss. Because of his devotion and sense of duty, the safety and liberty of each and every American is more secure. May God bless PFC Nicholas Cournoyer.

WEIGHT GAIN PREVENTION IN CHILDREN

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, one of my great passions as a Senator has been advocating for children and advancing initiatives that improve their health and welfare. I wish to share with my colleagues the results of a new study, funded in part by the National Institutes of Health, which reports on two simple steps that can be taken to counter a serious health crisis among America’s youth.

The crisis is obesity among all ages and most seriously among children. The Journal of the American Medical

Association reported last month that one-third of all children in the United States are either overweight or dangerously close to becoming so and, as a result, are at increased risk of becoming obese adults and developing diabetes and other health problems.

A new “America on the Move Family Study,” presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting, April 30, 2006, provides the first clinical evidence that overweight children can effectively prevent additional weight gain by making small changes to their daily lifestyle. The study was conducted by the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, the primary research arm for America on the Move Foundation, a national nonprofit dedicated to helping individuals and communities across the country improve health and quality of life. This study was designed to evaluate whether overweight children could reduce their risk of gaining additional weight through a combination of increasing physical activity and eliminating 100 calories a day from their diet.

In the study, investigators randomized 216 families with at least 1 overweight child to either a lifestyle intervention group or a control group. Families in the intervention group were asked to eliminate 100 calories a day from their diet by emphasizing a reduction of dietary sugar and an increase in physical activity by 2,000 steps daily. Families in the control groups were asked to monitor their diet and exercise levels. After 6 months, significantly more overweight children in the intervention group maintained or reduced their percent body mass index, BMI, compared to the self-monitoring group, 67 percent versus 53 percent.

The results of this study are striking. By taking two simple, common sense steps—engaging in more physical activity and reducing caloric intake by small amounts—families can help their children control weight gain and reduce obesity. Such steps can have an enormous impact on their health. I applaud this study for bringing this important message to the public’s attention.

REDUCE KIDS’ ACCESS TO GUNS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1.69 million children in the United States live in households where firearms are kept unlocked and loaded. Tragically but not coincidentally, guns kill an average of nearly eight children and teenagers each day. In addition, the Children’s Defense Fund estimates that at least four times as many are injured in nonfatal shootings. The vast majority of these shootings could be prevented if safe gun storage practices were more widely used.

Some parents believe that simply educating their children about the dan-

gers posed by firearms is enough to keep them safe. Unfortunately, this is not the case. A new study shows that parents who keep guns in their home may have dangerous misperceptions about their child’s familiarity with and access to guns.

The study, which was conducted by researchers from Harvard University and the San Francisco General Hospital, compared interview responses from 201 families who have guns in their homes. For each set of interviews, children were questioned separately from their parents. More than 70 percent of the children interviewed for the study said that they knew where to find a gun in their home. Surprisingly, 39 percent of the parents who said their children did not know the storage location of their firearms were contradicted by their children. Additionally, 22 percent of the parents who said their children had not handled their guns were contradicted by their children. These discrepancies are troubling and indicate that simply trying to hide the location of firearms in the home is not enough to adequately protect children from injuring themselves or others with a gun.

According to recent published reports, an estimated 35 percent of homes nationwide include guns. Common sense tells us that when guns and ammunition are secured, the risk of children injuring or killing themselves or others with a gun is significantly reduced. Last year, a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the risk of unintentional shooting or suicide by minors using a gun is reduced by as much as 61 percent when ammunition in the home is locked up. Simply storing ammunition separately from the gun reduces such occurrences by more than 50 percent.

While educating children about the dangers of guns is certainly necessary, the use of safe storage practices is critically important to the safety of children and families when guns are kept in the home. We should all urge firearms owners around the country to take steps to adequately secure their guns and ammunition.

EMERGENCY ENERGY ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, recently I joined my colleague, Senator NELSON of Nebraska, in introducing the Emergency Energy Assistance for Disabled Veterans Act. I am supporting this bill because I am concerned about inadequate reimbursement rates offered to veterans who must travel to VA facilities for treatment. The VA beneficiary travel program reimburses veterans 11 cents for every mile they are required to drive in order to visit a VA doctor. This reimbursement often is not enough to cover the cost of the