

legislation she has authored and sponsored over this past year. I have no doubt that she will continue to be a strong voice for servicemembers, veterans, and their families in the years ahead.

Today I honor Lieutenant Colonel ERNST for her 23 years of dedicated service to the U.S. Army Reserve and the Iowa National Guard. Her service in support of this Nation has been exemplary—and her mission continues. I look forward to working with Senator ERNST for years to come as we tackle the many challenges ahead.

#### SUPPORT FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I wish to speak today in support of Planned Parenthood and express how heartbroken I am over last week's shooting in Colorado Springs. My thoughts are with the victims and their families. To experience such violence in a place dedicated to saving lives is unthinkable.

I would also like to thank the staff of the clinic in Colorado Springs—and all Planned Parenthood clinics across the country. The health care services you provide are invaluable. You help so many people, and you do it in the face of so many challenges. I am grateful for your bravery and your compassion.

Following last week's attack, the media reported that staff rushed to the clinic's safe room with their patients. Let me repeat: a health clinic with a safe room. That a clinic dedicated to helping women—many of whom have no other option for health care—needs a safe room is unbelievable.

I have been deeply troubled over the years by the toxic rhetoric targeted at Planned Parenthood—and this dangerous rhetoric has only increased in recent months. It sends a signal that using violence to intimidate health care professionals and shut down clinics is somehow acceptable.

Let me be clear: these actions are not acceptable. It is shameful and disgusting and should be universally condemned. I do believe there is a link between the poisonous rhetoric directed at these health care providers and the violence used against them.

And I hope all of my colleagues in Congress—and every public official around the country—thinks carefully about the effects their words can have.

An FBI intelligence assessment from September said, "It is likely criminal or suspicious incidents will continue to be directed against reproductive health care providers, their staff and facilities." These incidents aren't new.

Over the last 40 years, there have been more than 200 arsons and bombings at women's health care clinics. Doctors and health care staff have been murdered. Since July, four Planned Parenthood facilities have been set on fire, including one in my home State of California. This type of violence is simply abhorrent.

And I strongly believe these aren't just attacks on Planned Parenthood and women's health; they are attacks on our way of life. This isn't what our country stands for.

The individuals who carry out these crimes have one goal: to terrorize doctors, nurses, and clinic staff; to make them quit their jobs; to force these health care clinics to close. They want to make it harder and harder for women to access reproductive health care and make their own health care choices.

In the wake of the Colorado Springs shooting, a former Planned Parenthood worker from Kansas shared some of her experiences. In the 3 years she worked at Planned Parenthood, there were four attempts to burn her clinic to the ground. Two cherry bombs were left at the door after hours. They exploded and forced the clinic to close temporarily. Windows were shot out on three occasions. And butyric acid—essentially a stink bomb—was put in the clinic's ventilation system numerous times. These aren't acts of political protest. These are serious crimes, and the perpetrators must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Before I close, I would like to reiterate just how important Planned Parenthood is for our country. Planned Parenthood serves some of the most vulnerable women in our society. It cares for 2.7 million patients in the United States. Ninety-seven percent of Planned Parenthood services carried out by its 700 clinics involve basic health care.

This includes breast exams, cervical cancer screenings, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and contraception. One in five women will use Planned Parenthood as their primary health care provider at some point in their lives. Nationwide, 80 percent of Planned Parenthood patients make less than \$18,000 per year. And Planned Parenthood is often the only health care option for low-income women and women in rural communities.

Simply put, Planned Parenthood is vital for the women of this country. It is bad enough that some politicians want to limit women's health care options by defunding Planned Parenthood. It is even more inexcusable that violence is being used to achieve what my Republican colleagues have failed to do.

I stand with Planned Parenthood now more than ever. And I call for an end to the sickening campaign of violence against clinics nationwide. Thank you.

#### CHURCH PLAN CLARIFICATION ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I am very pleased that the Senate may soon consider bipartisan legislation which I recently introduced with Senators PORTMAN and KLOBUCHAR: the Church Plan Clarification Act of 2015, S. 2308. By introducing this bill and asking for a unanimous consent agreement re-

garding its passage, our goal is to ensure the retirement security of clergy, church lay workers, and their families across the country.

The Church Plan Clarification Act addresses several unintended consequences resulting from the application of general tax and pension regulations to the unique structures of church pension plans. Churches and synagogues established some of the first pension plans in the country, several dating back to the 18th century, and they are designed to ensure that our clergy and lay staff have adequate resources during their retirement years.

Church pensions are critically important compensation plans that help support over 1 million clergy members across the country in their retirement—particularly those who dedicated their careers to serving in economically disadvantaged congregations.

Church plans are often structured to reflect the ecclesiastical teachings of their denomination. The resulting diversity of plan structures, coupled with the complexity of the legal and regulatory framework that applies to church plans, has led to the need for this legislation. The bill would correct several technical issues that, while small, are critical to the functioning and operation of church plans and the retirement benefits they provide.

While the corrections contained in S. 2308 would be of tremendous help to church plans, I want to make clear that the bill does not affect the definition of "church plan" under the Internal Revenue Code or Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, ERISA. In particular, no inference is intended by this legislation regarding the statutory requirements a pension plan must meet to be considered or treated as a "church plan" under IRC section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code and section 3(33) of ERISA, and the bill has no bearing on the interpretation of those sections. Rather, the Church Plan Clarification Act is simply about fixing the rules that govern how church plans operate and serve their participants.

Again, the Church Plan Clarification Act is targeted, noncontroversial, and has broad bipartisan and bicameral support. I hope we can work quickly to provide clarity for these plans by enacting this legislation and thereby ensuring that those who dedicate their lives to religious service are not inappropriately and unfairly disadvantaged.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE CHRISTOPHER J. CASTANEDA

Mr. SCOTT. Madam President, today I wish to honor the life of Private Christopher J. Castaneda, of Fripp Island, SC, who died while serving his country on November 19, 2015, in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

In January of 2015, Private Castaneda made the noble decision to answer the