grades and across ethnic lines for reading and math, proving that we are closing the achievement gap.

Much of what we have accomplished in Delaware, and at the East Side Charter School, serves as a model for our Nation.

I rise today to offer my full support as future generations of students and educators at East Side Charter School ready to face the challenges of the 21st century and overcome them.●

IN RECOGNITION OF LTC JOHN BURKE'S RETIREMENT

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of LTC John Burke upon his retirement from the U.S. Air Force. John is the longest certified C–5 pilot in the history of the U.S. Air Force, and has served his country with distinction for 32 years.

Since 1995, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served as Chief Pilot for the 709th Airlift Squadron at Dover Air Force Base. Assigned to overseas mission support, joint service exercises, humanitarian relief, Presidential movement and aircrew training, he has been indispensable to his squadron's success.

In his latest position, Lieutenant Colonel Burke was responsible for evaluating procedures and techniques that ensured the safety and efficacy of the C–5 in its strategic airlift missions, as well as evaluating its pilots.

As you may know, the C–5 is the Air Force's largest cargo aircraft, capable of quickly moving large numbers of men, women and materiel to troubled areas around the world.

The C–5 will ensure our military readiness for generations to come, as will Lieutenant Colonel Burke's legacy of leadership and heroism.

Lieutenant Colonel Burke is a well-rounded, seasoned officer with a record for consistently combining effective leadership and professionalism. He leads by example—motivating people, making key decisions, producing results and maintaining high morale. He has amassed an impressive 7,400 flight hours and frequent accolades.

Throughout his distinguished career, Lieutenant Colonel Burke flew in vital missions and earned numerous decorations. In a career that spans three decades, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served in significant military campaigns, such as Nickel Grass, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Just Cause.

On May 30, 1972, barraged by anti-aircraft fire flying over Southeast Asia, Burke landed in Song Be to deliver much needed fuel and ammunition to allied troops fighting hostile forces, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Additionally, he has garnered numerous other medals and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

Military service runs in the New York native's blood. Lieutenant Colonel Burke's father was a World War II Army Air Force navigator and bombardier, and his mother was an Army nurse. Joining the U.S. Air Force in 1970, Lieutenant Colonel Burke carried on the family tradition of military allegiance.

LTC John Burke marked his career with consistent, exemplary leadership in service to his Nation, earning a reputation for loyalty, dedication, integrity, and honesty. Upon his retirement he leaves a legacy of commitment to freedom that generations will follow. I commend him for his remarkable service and wish him the best in his future endeavors. He is a patriot in every sense of the word.●

NATIONAL GUARD COUNTER DRUG STATE PLANS PROGRAM

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the National Guard and urge my colleagues to support the National Guard Counter Drug States Plan Program.

The National Guard role is to provide counterdrug and drug demand reduction support as requested by local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations with a counterdrug nexus. The National Guard provides this support in consonance with the Office of National Drug Control Policy and Department of Defense guidance.

The mission of the National Guard Counter Drug Program is to assist and strengthen law enforcement and community-based organizations in reducing the availability of, and demand for, illegal drugs within the State and Nation through professional military support. The principal elements of counter-drug military support include highly skilled personnel, specialized technology, facilities, and diverse types of military training and skills. Operationally, this translates into port security assistance, operating non-intrusive inspection devices, aerial and ground reconnaissance, technical support, general support, community anti-drug coalition support, youth drug awareness programs, and use of training facilities.

The National Guard offers numerous military-unique skills to the counterdrug mission. These include linguist and translator support, investigative case and analyst support, communications support, engineer support, diver support, marijuana eradication support, transportation support, maintenance and logistical support, cargo and mail inspection, training of law enforcement and military personnel, surface reconnaissance, and aerial reconnaissance. In addition, the National Guard provides command, control, communications, computers, and information, C4I, integration; logistics planning; tactical and strategic operational and intelligence planning; the ability to support around-the-clock operations; liaison skills with civilian authority and interagency cooperation; resource integration; force protection training; operational security enforcement; communications security enforcement; and risk management skills.

We must fully fund the National Guard Counter Drug States Plans Program. The National Guard's success in interdicting drugs and other contraband contributes to the security of the Nation as a whole. Using my home State as an example, Florida has valid support requests from law enforcement and community-based organizations that would require approximately 250 personnel. Under the constraints of the estimated fiscal year 2003 budget, the National Guard was able to field 111 personnel, resulting in unfunded requests for 139 personnel and an unfunded requirement of 99 personnel based on an optimal program size of 210 personnel. In fiscal year 2002, the State of Florida fielded 148 personnel, and unfunded personnel requests totaled 102.

I am also a great believer in a balanced counterdrug program, both interdiction and demand reduction. The National Guard does some of the finest demand reduction work in the country. Young people look up to these citizen-soldiers and listen to what they say.

Counterdrug personnel assigned to perform drug demand reduction activities utilize numerous military skills including command, control and communication skills, tactical and strategic planning, liaison skills and training design and implementation skills. These assist communities with work plans, realistic time lines and assigned responsibilities. This support is essential for many community-based organizations in order to mobilize and sustain their efforts.

Additionally, the military value system and discipline instilled in all counterdrug personnel creates a significant demand to serve as role models and mentors supporting a wide array of prevention activities. Community based prevention organizations rely on National Guard personnel to incorporate this unique military orientation into activities such as youth camps, ropes challenge courses, high adventure training, high school drug education, Drug Education for Youth, mentoring, and other prevention and skill training activities.

The National Guard also provides unique facilities and equipment such as armories, training sites, obstacle courses, aircraft and wheeled vehicles in support of community prevention strategies. These facilities and equipment are often the only resources available to conduct youth camps, coalitions meetings or experiential learning initiatives. The leadership skills and military values embedded within our youth hopefully provide a morale foundation for future generations, as well as conveying to many thousands of youth the value of military service.