As Commissioner Tagliabue said in announcing this new program: ''Our clubs recognize that the men and women of our Armed Forces are tremendous NFL fans. This program is one small way to repay that support to families who lose a loved one in defense of our country in the Middle East. Our NFL owners, coaches and players speak with one voice when it comes to this project.''

The campaign cornerstone is a new national TV and radio announcement produced by NFL Films that aired on every NFL game telecast this past Veterans Day weekend. It is narrated by Vietnam veteran and former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Rocky Bleier. The message encourages NFL fans to support the Intrepid Foundation's Fallen Heroes Fund, which provides an immediate $10,000 grant to military families who have paid the ultimate price with the loss of a member in Iraq or Afghanistan. The following is the text for the television message narrated by Bleier:

The National Football League family is committed to supporting the courageous men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Mideast.

But the fight for freedom is not without loss.

And the NFL urges you to join us and the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund in supporting the military families of those heroes who have sacrificed their lives in the service of our country.

Please visit www.nfl.com/heroesfund and help support those families in need.

This program—and the $100,000 contribution that the NFL made to kickoff the initiative—is the latest in the NFL's continuing support of our U.S. military personnel. That tremendous NFL support dates back at least to World War II when 638 NFL players served in the military, including 19 who were killed in action. The NFL has worked with the USO for decades in sending NFL players overseas to Vietnam, Korea and more recently Iraq to let our courageous troops know that they are not forgotten.

I hope you will join me in applauding Mr. Adams and the NFL for their latest ''Families Helping Families'' public awareness program and thank them for their support of our brave men and women in uniform.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to a looming crisis for New England's groundfishermen. Last week, the New England Fishery Management Council voted to adopt a set of new regulations, known as Amendment 13. This package of regulations will permanently alter the character of New England's groundfish fishery, and will particularly harm the fishermen in my home State of Maine. This sweeping change in fisheries management is largely unneeded; in fact, most stocks of fish in the groundfish complex are rapidly rebuilding. There is a much larger problem in the fishery management process that has subverted a system of rational management and forced these unnecessary changes on our fishing industry. That problem is excessive litigation.

Amendment 13, like many other regulations driven by excessive litigation, will permanently harm Maine's fishermen and related businesses. Historically, numerous coastal communities in Maine have taken part in and benefitted from the groundfish fishery. Unfortunately, regulatory changes will force many of Maine's smaller groundfish boats out of the industry. Small fishing communities like Stonington, Rockland, and Port Clyde which used to be home to many groundfish vessels, are already suffering due to restricted access to fish stocks. The changes to these coastal communities clearly stem from regulations born of excessive litigation.

Further, these burdensome regulations will hurt boats of all sizes. Many small boats will not survive due to severe cuts in fishing time combined with the long distances that must be traveled in order to access fish stocks. In addition, Maine's larger vessels are leaving our States, moving to southern New England ports, in an effort to survive this latest round of regulations. The damaging effect of such an exodus on Maine's fishing infrastructure, which is at a critical minimum, will be irreparable. As Amendment 13 is put into place, revenues will continue to move south, and Maine's working waterfront will vanish, to be replaced by coastal development.

The drastic sacrifices demanded of our fishermen might be worthwhile if New England groundfish were truly at risk. However, fish stocks are rebounding at a tremendous rate. For example, Georges Bank haddock biomass figures have gone from less than 20,000 metric tons in 1994 to roughly 100,000 metric tons in 2002. Overall, groundfish biomass figures have tripled since 1994. This fishery is a success story. Unfortunately, litigants refuse to agree. They have stolen management authority away from the regional councils and given this power to the courts, which are particularly ill-suited to make biological decisions.

Excessive litigation also diverts precious resources from the main mission of the National Marine Fisheries Service: fisheries management. Each year the Service spends time and money defending itself in the courts. In fact, this year the Senate is considering appropriating $5 million to the National Marine Fisheries Service exclusively for the purpose of fighting litigation. This money could be better spent conducting research, if our management system was not engulfed in litigation.

We all suffer when a management system is under siege from excessive litigation. As in the case of Amendment 13, management plans are developed under an aura of crisis where managers must meet court-appointed goals before court-appointed deadlines. What we need instead, is fisheries management developed with measure and reason. We need a system where the views of stakeholders are valued.

In 1976, Congress passed the Fishery Conservation and Management Act. One of the strongest aspects of this act was the creation of regional fishery management councils. These councils rely on the participation of those who know the most about our Nation's fisheries. Unfortunately, some advocacy groups have chosen to bypass the council system by proceeding straight to court. In fact, one of these groups has already threatened to sue the National Marine Fisheries Service if they do not get what they want out of Amendment 13. This is truly discouraging, considering these regulations have yet to be published. Excessive litigation should not continue to diminish the participatory nature of fisheries management by removing decision-making authority away from those most qualified to manage our Nation's fisheries.

The Amendment 13 process is a clear example of why fisheries management belongs in the hands of fisheries managers. The courts handed our regional managers a set of impossible goals and an impossible time frame in which to achieve these goals. Nothing but the impossible can result from this situation, despite the efforts of regional managers to create a reasonable management plan. This entire process only demonstrates the weaknesses of regulation driven by excessive litigation, and the need to take management decisions out of the courts and place them back in the council system. That will require changes in the law.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe one such crime today. In September 1997, a gay man in Williamstown, NJ, was beaten enough to receive a black eye, at least two broken toes, and bruises all over his body. Later that day, his house was egged and a brick thrown through a window. Local kids, who allegedly committed the assault, screamed ''you got what you deserve, you faggot,'' at the time of the incident.

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 is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.