

sympathy goes out to his wife and his entire family as they deal with their loss. Corporal Speer was killed when his unit came under enemy fire in the Al Anbar province of Iraq on Friday, April 9, 2004.

Corporal Speer was a rifleman assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Camp Lejeune, NC. He performed his duty to his country admirably and I know his loss will be deeply felt by all those who knew him.

Michael Speer enlisted in the Marines in Davenport, IA, on January 16, 2001. He died a true patriot and it is fitting that we recognize his sacrifice here today.

STAFF SERGEANT CORY BROOKS

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Staff Sergeant Cory W. Brooks, a member of the South Dakota National Guard, who died on April 24, 2004, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sergeant Brooks was a member of the 153rd Engineer Battalion, which is based in Winner, SD. He died in a noncombat incident on Saturday.

Answering America's call to the military, Staff Sergeant Brooks joined the National Guard in May of 1989 and served as a combat engineer throughout his 15 years of service.

Born and raised in Phillip, SD, he was remembered as a dedicated athlete and student. Staff Sergeant Brooks' former football coach in high school, Jerry Rhodes said, "He was just like family. He was one of those kids you love to work with. He always did good work. He was a very happy-go-lucky kid." Jerry Rhodes son, Wade, picked his good friend to be the best man at his wedding in 1995. Wade said of Brooks growing up, "I spent more time at their house than I did my own. He was just like a brother to me."

Staff Sergeant Brooks was a very dedicated student and well educated. After excelling at Phillip High School and the University of South Dakota for his undergraduate studies, he went on to obtain his Juris Doctorate from the University of South Dakota.

Staff Sergeant Brooks is the second member of the South Dakota National Guard to be killed in combat since the war in Iraq began. Company A, which includes members from Wagner and Winner, was assigned to the 1st Marine Expedition Headquarters. Their company is responsible for defusing roadside explosives.

Staff Sergeant Brooks served our country and was a model of loyalty and dedication in the preservation of freedom. The thoughts and prayers of my family, as well as our country's, are with his family during this time of mourning. Our thoughts continue to be with all those families who have children, spouses, and other loved ones serving overseas.

Staff Sergeant Brooks led a full life, committed to his family, his Nation, and his community. It was his incred-

ible dedication to helping others that will serve as his greatest legacy. Our Nation is a far better place because of Staff Sergeant Brooks' contributions, and, while his family, friends, and Nation will miss him very much, the best way to honor his life is to remember his commitment to service and his family.

I join with all South Dakotans in expressing my sympathies to the friends and family of Staff Sergeant Brooks. I know that he will always be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

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.

In Davis, CA, on October 26, 2003, a homosexual man in his mid-twenties discovered that his automobile had been drenched with four flats worth of eggs. The damage to his vehicle was estimated at approximately \$4,000 and a gang tag was scrawled on the vehicle. The victim said that he felt his vehicle was targeted because he hangs a gay pride flag outside his home.

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.

HUD'S SECTION 8 VOUCHER REIMBURSEMENT CRISIS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to warn my colleagues about the potential low-income housing crisis that could jeopardize hundreds, if not thousands of people in their States as a result of an irresponsible, punitive, and unnecessarily harsh action taken last week by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For the first time in the 30-year history of the Section 8 Voucher Choice Program, there is the very real possibility that tens of thousands of low-income Americans will lose their housing vouchers this summer and fall and be left with nowhere to turn but homeless shelters and the streets. The mere possibility of this is shocking and it's something my colleagues need to be aware of immediately.

Congress did not intend for this to happen, and the appropriators pushed HUD to make sure it would not happen, but that is the course we are on. And it's all because of HUD's callous indifference to the plight of the most vul-

nerable and this administration's unremitting drive to destroy the safety net.

Using the most narrow possible interpretation of the appropriations bill, HUD issued a notification on Thursday that would retroactively abandon the long-standing practice of reimbursing public housing agencies for the actual costs of assisting the poor, the disabled, and the elderly through the section 8 voucher program. Instead, the new HUD policy will reimburse them on an inflation factor concocted by HUD's budgeteers that has absolutely no bearing on the actual operating costs of the Section 8 housing voucher program.

As a result, public housing agencies across the country are about to be blindsided by a rule change they did not anticipate and could not have prepared for.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials—NAHRO—is conducting a complete national survey of the potential effects of this change, which should be available later this week. But early analysis is already available, and it is not reassuring. As a result of this change, the association thinks that maybe 60,000 families may be at risk of losing their vouchers in the coming year. 60,000.

The notification does inform public housing agencies that they can appeal the decision by July 15, but offers no information about just how to do that. The notification also points out that HUD may not have any funds by then to adjust reimbursements that were appealed. So, go ahead and send the appeal letter, but just don't expect HUD to do anything about it.

If my colleagues harbor any doubts that this HUD notification will have severe consequences, they need only look at what is happening in Massachusetts now. The State has directed public housing agencies to notify 600 families that their vouchers will be terminated effective June 1 as a result of HUD's abrupt funding change. Barring an 11 hour temporary reprieve, those notices go out tomorrow. And that is just the tip of the iceberg in Massachusetts, some thousands more may be in jeopardy.

The State is being hit now because it must reconcile HUD's funding cuts within its existing fiscal year, which ends June 30, and there is no other way to do that other than withholding assistance from those currency receiving it.

Who are these 600 families? More than 60 percent of them are disabled, a significant portion are elderly, and all are low-income.

They are people like Mr. Milton Servis II. At the age of 15, he was hit by a speeding car while he walked. As a result of the collision, he sustained a serious head injury that has left himself disabled, with impairments of his vision, balance, and ability to walk.

Then, just last year, Mr. Servis II, sustained third degree burns on his hands in the Station Nightclub fire in