

The U.S. State Department estimates there are approximately 25,000 American citizens currently in Lebanon; 15,000 have registered with the State Department's Lebanon task force to receive evacuation information. We are keeping in constant contact with the task force.

Unfortunately, while we are working through all of this, current law requires that U.S. citizens and others who qualify to be evacuated by the Federal Government sign a promissory note pledging to reimburse the Government for their travel. They are later going to be billed by the State Department for the cost of any air, land, or sea transportation.

I am sure we all can imagine the situation or have family and friends—I have many friends, I have many people with whom I have talked, a friend over the weekend whose wife and young child went to visit family and have tried various roads and avenues to leave and have not been able to do that. People are frightened, people who are American citizens, who are asking us to help quickly and to please not put them in a situation of more financial hardship because they thought they were visiting their family in the summertime or they thought they were going to a beautiful wedding celebration or they were sharing the sorrow of a funeral or visiting grandpa or grandma or schoolchildren going on buses.

A colleague from the other side of the aisle has 300 members of a church community who are in Lebanon right now and have not been able to leave. Surely we can come together on a bipartisan basis. I know there is bipartisan interest in this issue. I am hopeful that we can come together and agree that we ought not to be charging for these people to leave in order to be able to survive with their families. They did not know this was going to happen. They had no idea they were going to be facing this situation. But now they find themselves needing help from their Government to bring them home and to keep them safe. We have a responsibility to make sure innocent people are not losing their lives or concerned about the safety of their children or their family members because of this situation. That is our responsibility, I believe, very strongly.

This situation is frightening enough without people being placed in financial hardship to pay for a ship to Cyprus and then find themselves where their airline ticket doesn't work from Cyprus so they have to buy a whole new ticket, or whatever it takes—thousands of dollars. People are being told that it is anywhere from \$3,000 to \$5,000 to be able to protect their families and leave. That is just not right.

I really am hopeful—I know colleagues are concerned about this—I am hopeful that this legislation will be strongly embraced and that we can quickly give the Secretary of State the authority. We have been told by legislative counsel they do not now have

the authority to waive these costs. So I am hopeful we will give them that authority very quickly and the Secretary of State will then be able, in a humanitarian way, to address a very critical and frightening situation for many Americans right now in Lebanon.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

A TRIBUTE TO ANNA MAY HAWEKOTTE SMITH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable and compassionate woman. Anna May Hawekotte Smith fought tirelessly for underdogs of every sort throughout a professional career hat lasted more than 50 years. She passed away on July 5 at the rich age of 90.

In 1950, at the age of 35, while pregnant with her fourth child, Anna May suffered a crippling stroke. She was left paralyzed, forced to relearn such basic functions as walking and talking. Through perseverance, Anna May recovered. While a limp and leg brace remained the only physical suggestions of her former impairment, the experience left a lasting impression on Anna May. For the next 55 years, she used her extraordinary empathy, skills, and determination to help others and to advance many worthy causes.

Over the course of her lifetime, Anna May Hawekotte Smith served many roles—educator, administrator, advocate of social justice, champion of women's rights, wife, and mother. She attended Barat College in Lake Forest, IL. After graduating in 1938, Anna May obtained a master's degree in speech education from Columbia University in New York. She continued her graduate work in speech at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, and interned with doctors at the University of Illinois Neuropsychiatric Clinic. Anna May Hawekotte Smith began her professional career as a professor at Barat College. She was soon promoted to chairman of the college's speech and drama department. During her tenure at Barat, she broadcast the first live women's radio talk show to spotlight issues related social justice and the advancement of women.

In 1966, she helped develop a program at Barat to help high school girls from low-income families in Chicago and Lake County to prepare for college. The Upward Bound Program, as it was called, ran for 8 years and assisted hundreds of young women.

It was also during her time at Barat that Anna May met her future husband, Charles Carroll Smith. Charles was executive director of the Catholic Youth Organization of Chicago and the administrative assistant to the late Archbishop Bernard J. Sheil. The pair wed in 1941 and raised three children together.

Anna May Hawekotte Smith was a woman of active faith. That was evident in her work on behalf of the Catholic Church, as well as in her calm acceptance of the hand of God in her

own life. Anna May Hawekotte Smith did not fear change; she embraced it as an adventure and God's will for her. Her daughter, Sheila Smith, said her mother was never afraid of seeing one door close because she trusted God would open a new door. Sheila remembers a couple of years ago, when Anna May learned that Barat College would be closing its doors. She didn't express anger or frustration. Instead, she told her daughter that it was time to focus on a new venture: the Barat Education Foundation. The foundation, created in 2000, would carry on the legacy of the school where she had spent so many years.

In 1969, Anna May's husband Charles passed away. Sheila remembers an evening shortly after her father died. She was sitting in the kitchen with her mother when Frank Sinatra's classic song, "My Way" came on the radio. Anna May told her daughter that, though she had been comfortable in her life, she had often done what was expected of her and what other people wanted. Widowed now, at the age of 54, she was free to make her own decisions, to live her life her way.

Anna May accepted a teaching position at Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois Springfield, in 1973 and remained a member of the university faculty until her retirement in 1985. Today, a scholarship in her name recognizes Anna May's commitment to the advancement of women.

Following her retirement, Anna May moved back to Chicago, where she became assistant director for job development programs at the Northern Illinois National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Throughout her life, she also supported social justice causes ranging from civil rights to women's rights.

Mr. President, this Friday, July 21, on what would have been Anna May's 91st birthday, her friends and family will gather at a memorial service at Barat College Chapel to remember and honor this remarkable woman. In the words of her family, Anna May Hawekotte Smith was more than a lifelong learner, she was a lifelong doer. All of us who knew her recall her not only with fondness but with great admiration.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of those whom she loved and who loved her, especially her children, Charles Smith, Sheila Smith, and Catherine Smith Wilson; her two brothers; and her six grandchildren.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to

the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On July 15, 2006, in Chicago, IL, a gay man was attacked by Marquell Shepard after leaving a local bar. Shepard approached the man, berating him with sexually derogatory slurs. Shepard then physically assaulted him and fled the scene. He was soon picked up by police and charged with a felony hate crime.

I believe that the 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.

SPACE SHUTTLE "DISCOVERY" STS-121 MISSION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, yesterday, July 17, 2006, marked the successful conclusion of the STS-121 space shuttle *Discovery* mission with its safe landing at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. This 13-day mission was the 115th shuttle mission and the 18th to visit the International Space Station. STS-121 satisfied its "return to flight" objectives by flight testing improvements to the shuttle and testing on-orbit shuttle repair procedures. This flight provided more than 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies to the space station and enabled its number of occupants to grow to three. STS-121 included three important spacewalks and laid the groundwork for the continued assembly, and ultimately doubling in size, of the space station.

I applaud the bravery, expertise, and accomplishments of the STS-121 crew—Commander Steven Lindsey, Pilot Mark Kelly, and Mission Specialists Michael Fossum, Lisa Nowak, Thomas Reiter, Piers Sellers, and Stephanie Wilson. This successful mission is a testament to the thousands of people who work on the space shuttle and space station programs.

Mr. President, we must continue with our plans to fly the space shuttle in order to complete the construction of the International Space Station. Equally important, we must work together to preserve the workforce that will soon become the backbone of the new crew exploration vehicle and the next human space project.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, more than 2 months ago I joined the Chairmen of both the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, the Democratic and Republican leaders of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and Members of Congress from both parties to introduce a

bill to reauthorize and reinvigorate the temporary provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The bicameral, bipartisan introduction of this bill reflects not only its historic importance as a guarantor of the right to vote for all Americans, but also the broad consensus that the expiring provisions must be extended this year without delay. Unfortunately, we in the Senate have been delayed in getting this bill to the Senate floor by repeated cancellations and postponements of committee hearings and markups. The bill was also delayed in the House of Representatives for a month by a small group of opponents. Fortunately, the House was able to pass this legislation last week with 390 Members voting in favor. Now it is time for the Senate to do its part and pass this bill.

At my request, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee has agreed to hold a special executive business session of the committee so that after a month of delay we can report out the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006. I hope that this vital civil rights legislation will be ready for full Senate consideration without further delay and that we can proceed with deliberate speed to pass the House-passed bill so that it may become law before Congress takes its summer vacation.

The U.S. Constitution specifically provides that Congress has the power to remedy discrimination under both the fourteenth and the fifteenth amendments. Over the course of nine Judiciary Committee hearings we received testimony from a range of constitutional scholars, voting rights advocates, and Supreme Court practitioners. There was agreement among these witnesses that Congress is at the height of its powers when giving enforceable meaning to these amendments by enacting laws that address racial discrimination in connection with voting. The fourteenth and fifteenth amendments have not changed. As long as these amendments are in our Constitution, Congress has the authority to enforce them, especially on matters of racial discrimination in connection with the right to vote. These are matters of fundamental importance.

The Senate Judiciary Committee held several hearings this year on the continuing need for the provision of the Voting Rights Act that requires covered jurisdictions to "pre-clear" all voting changes before they go into effect. This provision has been a tremendous source of protection for the voting rights of those long discriminated against and also a great deterrent against discriminatory efforts cropping up anew. Some academic witnesses suggested in their committee testimony that section 5 should be a victim of its success. In my view, abandoning a successful deterrent just because it works defies logic and common sense. Why risk losing the gains we have made?

When this Congress finds an effective and constitutional way to prevent violations of the fundamental right to vote, we should preserve it. Now is no time for backsliding.

Since section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was first enacted in 1965 and last reauthorized in 1982, the country has made tremendous progress in combating racial discrimination. Certain jurisdictions disregarded the fifteenth amendment for almost 100 years and had a history of pervasive discriminatory practices that resisted attempts at redress from the passage of the fifteenth amendment in 1870 to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Section 5 is intended to be a remedy for violations of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, in place for as long as necessary to enforce those amendments and eliminate practices denying or abridging the rights of minorities to participate in the political process. In fact, due in large measure to the remedies provided in the VRA, many voters in jurisdictions covered for the purposes of section 5 have gained the effective exercise of their right to vote.

However, based on the record established in hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Property Rights, which builds on the extensive record established in the House of Representatives, there remains a compelling need for section 5. The Judiciary Committee received three categories of evidence supporting the continuation of this remedy. First, there is evidence that even with section 5 in place, covered jurisdictions have continued to engage in discriminatory tactics. Often, this recurring discrimination takes on more subtle forms than in 1965 or 1982, such as vote dilution, which relies on racially polarized voting to deny the effectiveness of the votes cast by members of a particular race. Second, there is evidence of the effectiveness of section 5 as a deterrent against bad practices in covered jurisdictions. Finally, there is evidence of the prophylactic effect of section 5, preserving the gains that have been achieved against the risk of backsliding.

Today, I would like to provide some of the evidence received in the Judiciary Committee about the persistence of discriminatory practices in covered jurisdictions that supports reauthorization of this crucial provision.

The robust record compiled in the Senate Judiciary Committee includes voluminous evidence of recurring discrimination in section 5 covered jurisdictions. Often, this recurring discrimination takes on more subtle forms than in 1965 or 1982, such as vote dilution and redistricting to deny the effectiveness of the votes cast by members of a particular race. Notably, many jurisdictions are repeat offenders, continuing a pattern of persistent resistance dating back to the enactment of the VRA. Debo P. Adegbile, Associate