

Mr. President, Sharon Daly is retiring from Catholic Charities USA. She will be deeply missed for her thoughtful guidance and leadership. I have confidence, however, that she will remain an inspiration to those who will follow in her footsteps.

TEEN DRIVER SAFETY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during the recent district work period, I read a front-page Chicago Tribune news article that reminded me of the importance of educating young adults about driving safety. And as students in Gibson City, IL, can tell you, the story is also a testament to what can be achieved through dedication, perseverance, and heart.

Summer can be a dangerous time for teen drivers, many of whom are just beginning to build their experience behind the wheel. In my home State of Illinois, July is the deadliest month for teen drivers. An average of 12 Illinois teens have been killed in car accidents every July for the last 10 years. We must work to prevent these tragic losses by educating America's teenage drivers about driver safety.

The Tribune article highlighted the story of the Arends family, of Gibson City, IL, who have turned an unimaginably heartbreaking tragedy into a successful campaign to save the lives of teen drivers. Three and a half years ago, 17-year-old twins Greg and Steve Arends were driving to work when Greg, the driver, lost control of the car, which slammed sideways into a telephone pole at 80 miles per hour. Neither boy was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and both boys' seatbelts were fastened, but unfortunately, Greg's side of the vehicle bore the impact of the crash, and he died at the hospital. Miraculously, his twin brother Steve survived, thanks in part to wearing a seatbelt.

A year and a half after the accident, despite their immense pain and grief, the Arends family responded to a call from Judy Weber-Jones, a teacher at the local high school, who asked if they would be willing to help launch a teen driver safety campaign in Gibson City. They agreed, and Steve Arends even decided to participate in presentations for his peers. His is a powerful message, and it is already making a difference in the lives of teens in Gibson City. Though the accident left Steve with injuries that he is still trying to overcome, he has displayed great courage in sharing his unfortunate experience with his peers in Central Illinois.

Over the last year and a half, the campaign at Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School, called Project Ignition—License to Live, has grown to attract the participation of dozens of students and community volunteers. The Arends family has allowed students to place pictures of Greg around the school and gave the group a picture of the car mangled in the accident. Roadside signs erected all over town read "Slow

Down. Buckle Up. Remember Greg and Steve." Students have staged mock car accidents and organized demonstrations with crash simulators. The group has also produced videos, PowerPoint presentations, and public service announcements aimed at increasing seatbelt use, reducing speeding, and promoting safe driving practices among teens.

I commend the Arends family, Ms. Weber-Jones, and all those who collaborate with the Project Ignition—License to Live program for their work to save the lives of young drivers in Illinois. The campaign's success has been remarkable.

Since the start of the Project Ignition—License to Live program, seatbelt use among teens at Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School has increased at least 20 percent, the number of speeding tickets issued to teens has decreased by more than 70 percent, and the number of accidents reported to local police departments has dropped by more than half. This program is indeed saving lives. Six teens were involved in car accidents this past school year, and in all six cases, the teens were wearing their seatbelts and walked away with only minor injuries.

So what is Project Ignition—License to Live doing differently than other teen driver safety programs? In just a short time, this program has been able to achieve levels of improvement in teen driver safety and accident prevention that parents, teachers, law enforcement, and other leaders have not been able to accomplish in decades. The most notable difference is that this program is fueled by teens themselves. They have found a way to package messages about wearing seatbelts, slowing down, and staying alert that truly resonate among their peers. Theirs is a model that I believe should be replicated across the Nation.

The SAFETEA highway and transit bill that Congress passed 1 year ago included a provision to reward States that have passed strong primary seatbelt laws. Such laws allow law enforcement officials to stop, ticket, and fine drivers for not wearing a seatbelt. My home State of Illinois is one of those States that have already passed a primary seatbelt law. In 2006, Illinois will receive a one-time payment of \$30 million in Federal funds authorized by SAFETEA. I commend Illinois for not only passing a primary seatbelt law that will save lives but also for dedicating all of the \$30 million to highway safety programs. I recently sent a letter to Governor Blagojevich urging him to use the funds to bolster the efforts of groups like Project Ignition License to Live.

As the example of Gibson City and the Arends family shows, young adults take to heart the life lessons of their peers. Therefore, Governor Blagojevich and the State of Illinois would be wise to coordinate with groups such as Project Ignition—License to Live so that young adults can share their per-

sonal experiences and remind their peers to drive safe and buckle up. I urge my fellow Senators to continue to fund these important safety programs and to work with their State governments to pass primary seatbelt laws so that other States can follow Illinois' example and make highway safety a priority.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

AIRMAN JASON J. DOYLE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Navy Airman Jason Doyle of Nebraska. Airman Doyle died after falling overboard from the USS *Kitty Hawk* off the eastern coast of Japan on July 8. He was 19 years old.

Airman Doyle grew up near Sunset, UT. In 2000, he moved to Bellevue, NE and was a 2005 graduate of Papillion-La Vista South High School. He joined the Navy immediately following graduation.

Airman Doyle had a lifelong interest in flying and in Japanese culture. He turned those interests into an opportunity with the Navy. He was deployed with the Electronic Attack Squadron, VAQ, 136 aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk* in October 2005. His first leave was at a Japanese port, where he was able to experience a culture he had been fascinated with his entire life. Thousands of brave Americans like Airman Doyle are serving the United States worldwide.

Airman Doyle is survived by his father, Dale Doyle; his mother, Martha Bower; his stepmother, Susie Doyle; his brother Brandon; and sisters Shauna, Whitney, and Ashley.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring Airman Jason Doyle.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, commonly known as the Vets Corp. This bill, the Veterans Corporation Reauthorization Act of 2006, was developed in a cooperative fashion by members of the Small Business and Veterans Affairs' Committees, in conjunction with Senator TALENT who was involved in the original establishment of the Vets Corp during his tenure in the other body.

The Vets Corp has a crucial mission—to foster entrepreneurship and business opportunities for veterans, with a special focus on service-disabled veterans. During this time of conflict abroad, this mission is extremely relevant. A seamless transition from military to civilian status requires that we give our veterans the tools necessary to succeed in their post-military lives. The Vets Corp seeks to do just this for veteran-owned small businesses.

Created by Congress in 1999, the Vets Corp had a slow start. While I believe that the new Vets Corp leadership is turning things around, there are some lingering concerns about the Vets Corp's funding and mission. I am hopeful that this legislation we are introducing today will help remedy these concerns. Under the terms of the legislation, the Vets Corp would be provided matching funds instead of a straight allocation. In addition, this bill would clarify the purpose of the organization as well as improve the structure of their advisory board.

Mr. President, I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill. I applaud the hard work of Senators KERRY, SNOWE, TALENT, and their staffs in crafting this bipartisan bill. I hope my colleagues will support this bill and I urge its speedy passage.

VIOLENCE IN DARFUR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am deeply troubled that violence in Darfur continues. It is disheartening to learn that the Government of Sudan continues to serve as an obstacle to the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping forces that could bolster the African Union Mission in Sudan, AMIS. While AMIS has conducted its mission to the best of its ability, it is clear that it has neither the resources nor the mandate to stop the violence that is affecting the lives of millions of innocent people. It remains critical that an international peacekeeping force be allowed to deploy to Darfur to augment the African Union Mission in Sudan and to establish a lasting and sustainable peace.

Peace in Darfur has been elusive, but it is not unattainable. The Government of Sudan must be a willing partner for peace; it must work with the international community to find an acceptable and expedient plan to introduce peacekeeping forces to that region. Until a more robust peacekeeping force can deploy to Darfur, it is important that the international community support continuing AMIS efforts there. Finally, parties to the conflict in Darfur must also abide by the recently agreed upon Darfur Peace Agreement, DPA, although it is apparent that this peace agreement is showing signs of strain.

Peace in Darfur is critical for establishing a lasting and comprehensive peace throughout Sudan and the region. That said, we must not ignore the continuing need to press for progress on the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement, CPA. The U.S. Government, with the international community and the United Nations, must continue to press for progress in implementing the CPA between the north and the south of Sudan. Unfortunately, well over a year from the signing of the CPA, it has become painfully clear that various important elements of the agreement have yet to be implemented, let alone completed. Key issues concerning land tenure rights, critical border agreements, oil revenue sharing,

and armed militias in southern Sudan have yet to be settled or addressed fully.

While much of the lack of progress relating to the CPA relates to the complexity of the peace agreement, much of it relates to the limited capacity of the Government of Southern Sudan, GOSS, to provide effective governance, services, and protection of its citizens. There remain serious obstacles to the establishment of a viable and strong GOSS, including a continuing lack of sufficient infrastructure throughout the south and sporadic violence that disrupts various parts of the region. The international community must continue its support of Sudan's CPA, which means addressing the capacity that parties to the agreement have to implement the agreement.

The U.S. Government and the international community need to be sustained, coordinated, and comprehensive. We cannot dismiss the significance of the linkages and impact that each of these agreements have on one another, nor their significance for developing a solid foundation for addressing conflict throughout the region. Successful implementation of both the CPA and DPA will provide significant benefits to all communities in Sudan and will set the stage for a new era of peace for the entire country and region.

NATIONAL VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Ms. SNOWE. The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 created the National Veterans Business Development Corporation—The Veterans Corporation—to address gaps in providing small business and entrepreneurship assistance to veterans and service-disabled veterans. These services are to be delivered through newly created, community-based veterans business resource centers, VBRCs. The legislation authorized Federal funding through fiscal year 2004, with the requirement that the Corporation “institute and implement a plan to raise private funds and become a self-sustaining corporation.”

While the Veterans Corporation's purpose and mission are well-intentioned, in practice, the Corporation has been unable to become self-sustaining and continues to rely on congressional appropriations. Furthermore, the Corporation's funding concerns have diminished its ability to create a vibrant national network of VBRCs. The Corporation's struggles have led it astray from the original intent of the law and hurt its delivery of services to our Nation's veterans. As such, my colleagues and I are introducing legislation to reauthorize the Veterans Corporation and to improve the direction of the Corporation as it works to serve veteran and service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs.

Although the Veterans Corporation has fallen on hard times, its vision of

assisting veterans with their business needs is still admirable. In fact, according to the Small Business Administration, about 22 percent of veterans were either purchasing or starting a new business or considering doing so in 2004. Moreover, almost 72 percent of these new veteran entrepreneurs planned to employ at least one person at the outset of their new venture. Supporting veterans' small business needs has become increasingly important as soldiers begin to return from continuing U.S. military operations worldwide.

I have worked hard to put the Veterans Corporation on the track to success and to support the veteran entrepreneurs and veteran-owned small businesses that it serves. I have led efforts to ensure proper oversight of the Corporation, as well as assisted the Corporation through appropriate legislative action.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I requested a Government Accountability Office, GAO, study, released in August 2004, to ensure that the Veterans Corporation was meeting its responsibilities and the needs of our Nation's veterans. The GAO report concluded that the Veterans Corporation faced a number of challenges in achieving self-sufficiency, noting that dramatically lower-than-expected revenues delayed the estimated date for achieving self-sustaining operations from fiscal year 2004 to fiscal year 2009. The GAO was also concerned with the Corporation's distinction as a government corporation, as determined by the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Justice. This determination subjected the Corporation to numerous agency requirements and drained significant resources away from serving veterans. Again, this designation inhibited the Corporation's ability to become self-sustaining.

In the fall of 2004, I introduced emergency legislation that was passed into law to clarify the Corporation's status as a “quasi-private entity,” not a “government corporation.” At the time, this legislation relieved the 12-employee Corporation from burdensome Federal agency reporting requirements.

Following the enactment of this legislation, many of my colleagues and I encouraged the Corporation to work hard to get its fiscal house in order and to focus on reaching out to veterans in local communities, particularly through VBRCs. Unfortunately, the Corporation's most recent efforts to become self-sustaining have yielded insufficient results. Furthermore, since its inception, the Corporation has only succeeded in establishing four VBRCs. Therefore, it is appropriate to restructure the corporation to meet the original intent of the law and to better serve our veteran entrepreneurs.