

Aaron died, 13 other men in his unit—eight of them from Ohio—died alongside him. It was a tragedy that was felt by the Nation and felt by the State of Ohio.

Aaron's family and friends remember him as a quiet young man with an upbeat demeanor. His smile was truly something special. With it, he could light up an entire room. He was easy-going and social with his friends, always ready to laugh. At the same time, though, when it came time to get things done, no one worked harder than he did.

Aaron's capacity for leadership was unique, and he was active in both his church and community. His words always had a great impact on those who heard them. A 2001 graduate of Southeastern High School—where he had run both cross-country and track and field—he had been elected by his classmates to serve as senior class president. Leonard Steyer, Aaron's principal, said, "When you're senior class president, that should tell you quite a bit about what kind of young man he was."

Aaron was also known for his compassion. His mother Sara was active with Habitat for Humanity, and they were planning to help build a house together when Aaron returned from Iraq. In the words of Cody Elam, one of Aaron's friends from high school, Aaron "was the kind of guy to give you the shirt off his back if you needed it."

Aaron joined the Marines shortly after graduating. He wasn't the first member of his family to serve in the military—his older brother Matt was stationed in Kosovo at the time. According to his father, Steve, Aaron simply wanted the challenge of being a marine.

It is impossible to remember LCpl Aaron Reed without also remembering the other marines of Lima Company. The bond among these men was something we do not see every day. They were truly brothers. Because Aaron had dark hair and glasses, they nicknamed him after the fictional wizard "Harry Potter."

Before his death, Aaron had been promoted to team leader. According to his friend Joey Barker, Aaron was spending almost all of his spare time analyzing past missions to better prepare for the next one. But, this is simply the kind of man Aaron was—always hard-working and always willing to do his best for others.

Aaron kept in touch with his family and friends regularly while in Iraq, calling and e-mailing frequently. Aaron and his friend Joey had been playing an intense game of tic-tac-toe through the mail. Joey remembers that Aaron had been "in one of the best moods he'd ever heard him, laughing and joking around." At the time, he had been in Iraq since March 2005, and was scheduled to come home in late September.

Aaron's dad's last communication from Aaron was through e-mail, a

short note letting him know his son was safe. His dad still chuckles when he reads the greeting—"Hey Daddy-O," using the nickname he had given his father, "nothing much going on here. Just the daily grind . . . Just thought I'd drop you a short note to let you know I was doing fine." And in an e-mail to his mother, Sara, Aaron wrote, "Mom, I'm just out here doing the best I know how to do."

It was typical of Aaron to describe his service in Iraq as "nothing much." He was always willing to serve others and do so with a cheerful smile on his face.

Aaron remained positive throughout his time in Iraq. Angela Flowers had been his friend since the time they met in seventh grade, and the two wrote each other frequently during Aaron's deployment. Aaron called when he was able, and Angela remembers the last time they talked. "He was extremely optimistic and positive," she said. "He was still the same old Reed."

Hundreds of mourners gathered at Aaron's funeral to pay their respects. Family and friends talked about Aaron the jokester, Aaron the faithful friend, and Aaron the steadfast teammate. They also laughed and told funny tales about joy riding and the typical teenage pranks that Aaron had played.

They also spoke of Aaron's faith in God. Aaron was wearing a cross around his neck when he died. It was recovered and returned to his mother Sara. She wears that cross every day.

At his funeral, Aaron's friend Joey played guitar and sang one of Aaron's favorite songs: "The Dance," by Garth Brooks. "We all loved Aaron, and Aaron loved all of us," Joey said. "He left this world much better than he found it."

Aaron had big plans for his life. He was planning to attend college when he returned from Iraq. He loved to write, and his father believes Aaron would have become an excellent writer. "He had the heart of a poet," his father said. "And he wrote some very good things."

Aaron will never be forgotten. A memorial scholarship has been established in his honor. Family, friends, community members, and complete strangers gave willingly and generously. Almost \$25,000 has been raised, and the first scholarship of \$1,000 was granted last spring to a graduating Southeastern senior.

Aaron's mother Sara also worked to build a Habitat house in his honor and in the honor of Army SPC Gavin Colburn, another Ohioan from Aaron's hometown who also lost his life serving in Iraq. Aaron had told his mother that when he got home, they would volunteer together to help build a Habitat house. After his death, several of Aaron's friends worked with his mother Sara to help his dream become a reality. Fittingly, they decided to name the building Hometown Hero House.

I had the privilege of meeting several of Aaron's family members and friends

at a service held in his honor. Each remembers the beaming, megawatt smile that would always light up Aaron's face. And they will always remember that Aaron died while serving our Nation.

"Aaron believed in what he was doing, which made him my hero," his father Steve said. "Now he's everyone's hero."

Mr. President, 21 years, 11 months, and 11 days was the short time that Aaron lived on this Earth, but we are all better off because of the time he did live. He was a young man who genuinely loved life and had compassion for others. His dedication to his friends, family, community, and country was unmatched. Aaron is a model of what we all hope our children will become.

My wife Fran and I continue to keep the family of Aaron Reed in our thoughts and prayers.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I say to my colleague, Senator DEWINE, those have been very moving tributes to fallen soldiers from his State of Ohio. He has set a good example for all of us on recognizing the service and sacrifice of those from his home State. I find as I listen to those tributes that they are extremely well done. I thank the Senator for that.

I also wish to acknowledge that the Senator from Ohio will be leaving at the end of this term and that I have very much appreciated working with him. He has been one of the very serious Members of this body, and we are going to miss him. I wanted to say to him that I certainly appreciate his service in the Senate. He has always been a constructive colleague, somebody who was working diligently to try to solve problems facing the country. We very much appreciate his dedication to the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and tell him that I have enjoyed working with him very much. We have worked on things together. You can work across the aisle in this body and get things done. I thank him for his very kind and generous words.

DISASTER RELIEF FOR FARMERS

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, as this interregnum continues, as we wait for some kind of resolution—we were told an hour and a half ago that would be forthcoming in 45 minutes—I wanted to read a letter I received from a young farm family that had been hit by one of the disasters I had referenced earlier. This family is from Souris, ND. It was a letter that was written to me last year about the extraordinary rains. This is what the father of the family wrote:

The rains began in earnest the last days of May 2005. Our crops were in the ground so the majority of the input costs for the crops

were already realized. We received 25 inches in 33 days and the attached pictures show the result. In our local town residents were going up and down the streets in boats.

We did our very best to cope with expenses but with the increased energy prices and the loss of crop income we and all the other producers in our area lost the battle. Our farm had financial reversals in the amount of \$110,000. We carry crop insurance but this program does not begin to cover our risks.

In speaking with loan officers at 2 of our local banks I was told that First National expects to restructure 60% of their Ag. Loans and State Bank estimated 75%–80%. This is serious business in agriculture.

We have felt the seriousness of the disasters in the South from last year's hurricanes and we have urged our delegation to support help for them. However our area was understandably off everyone's radar screen yet we had the devastation here as well.

Concerns abound as we look to the future. As I look out my window to the west I see a field that we have seeded since my grandfather homesteaded here in 1892. For the first time we will not be able to seed it. It is 120 acres with about 60 acres still under water from last summer. The Federal Government has placed a heavy burden on us by declaring our area as a Prairie Pot Hole Region. This means I cannot drain this excess water into a nearby drainage system. I am stuck with it. How do I begin to recover the financial losses mentioned above when the Government Regulations limit those opportunities? The water is to the top of the road on both sides and now after being this way for close to a year the road is saturated and just about ruined. I just spoke with a township supervisor and they feel they will be closing the road because of liability concerns.

We are asking that you come along side us and help us through this impossible situation that has been presented to us by a combination of nature and government regulations. Please support the Disaster Relief Appropriation currently working its way through Congress. If you do, you will literally be the difference between many being able to continue to produce food and fiber for this great nation and not being able to continue this production.

Thank you so much for listening to part of our story.

This gentleman included pictures. I don't think these are pictures that can be seen on camera, but I will hold them up and describe them. These are six different pictures. In some of them, there is water from horizon to horizon. Here we see a view that would go for miles and miles. There is water everywhere. This is what happened last year over much of my State—as I indicated earlier, a million acres that could not even be planted, another 600,000 acres where the crops were drowned out. Now this year, as I have said before, irony of ironies, the worst drought since the 1930s. Land I have been on many times in my life south of my hometown is like a moonscape—nothing growing, just dirt; land that had been planted and nothing even emerged.

To understand what happened, this is the weather for the month of July in my State. Bismarck, ND, is the State capital. It started out with a day at 90 degrees; the next day, 92. Then right after July 4 it went over 90 degrees the next 2 days. Then it jumped up to 102, and then it was 97. The next week, 96, and then it was 101, 105, 94, 101, 105, 106.

This is not heat index. These were the actual temperatures. Then we had kind of a cooling, and it got into the 80s. Then on the 22nd it jumped back up to 96, 97, 96, 90s all these days, 99, 97, and then the real corker, on the 30th of July, 112 degrees. That is really hot. I had friends who went out and drove south of my hometown that day who told me it was so hot it took your breath away, 112 degrees. I am not talking heat index or any of that; I am talking the actual temperature.

The crops just burned up. During this period, there was no precipitation—no precipitation, no precipitation, no precipitation that whole week, no precipitation this entire week, no precipitation until the 19th. In fact, not a drop until the 19th of July, and then there was 7/100th, then there was 32/100th, then no precipitation, none for the next period going through the end of the month. So from the 21st to the 31st, not another drop of precipitation. Meanwhile, 101, 105, 106, 112 degrees. This is why the disaster is so serious, a combination of virtually no precipitation—for this whole month, there was 39/100th of an inch of precipitation—and day after day, 90 and 100 degrees. The crops just burned up.

We can say: Tough luck, you are out of here, but that is not what we have done in the past. In the past, going back to 1989, we had the disaster assistance bill, \$3.4 billion. In 1990, we had disaster assistance. Every year with the exception of 1991, right through 2005.

Disaster assistance in 2000 was \$14.8 billion. The next year it was \$11.3 billion. This disaster package is \$4.5 billion for 2 years, so it is dramatically less. Obviously, that is a result of more widespread disasters, perhaps, in those years, so the cost is less, but also this is a less generous disaster bill, as we have moved to reduce things, cut things from the \$6.7 billion to \$4.5 billion or just under \$4.5 billion.

I think most people would acknowledge I have not been somebody who has ever sought to hold up the business of the Senate. I have been here 20 years. That is not how I have conducted myself. But I am left with no alternative and no choice when a commitment was made to me yesterday, both publicly and privately, that we would go to the Agriculture appropriations bill today and that I would have a chance to offer the amendment. I have reviewed the RECORD. It is very clear, the commitment that was made. As of this hour—we are approaching the 6 o'clock hour—that commitment has not been kept.

I understand there are others who may have lodged objection to going to the bill. But there are ways to go to a bill. It happens every day here. It happens every day that we go to a bill to which somebody has an objection. We have completely reserved the rights of our colleagues. They can require a supermajority vote. They can raise a budget point of order. They can raise

rule XVI. As I have indicated, it is clear to me rule XVI doesn't apply because we have written this in a way that it does not apply. They can insist on a vote. Fair enough. That is all I am asking for. I am asking for a vote. These people deserve that chance.

The fact is, literally thousands of farm families in my State are hanging in the balance. Right now, they are done with production for the year. Many of these places didn't have any production. This time of year, you go to your banker, and the bankers are saying to me that if there is no disaster assistance, 5 to 10 percent of farm families in my State are finished. What does that mean? We have 35,000 farm families in North Dakota. Five percent, if my math is right, would be 1,750. Ten percent would be 3,500 farm families who are out there right now wondering: What is the Federal Government going to do? Are they going to do what they have always done every year for almost the last 20 years and provide some kind of disaster assistance, or are they going to say: Tough, you are on your own, you are out of luck? I very much hope there will be a response and it will be a favorable response. These are as good as any people I know anywhere, hard-working, decent, honest, good people. They have been hit by the most extraordinary set of conditions. This drought has been rated the third worst drought in our Nation's entire history.

The flooding last year was unprecedented in my State. Outside of the 1997 floods, which was a 500-year flood—the worst flood in 500 years—we have not seen anything like it. I don't pretend to know what is going on with the weather out there, but something extraordinary is happening—extreme weather and extreme weather conditions, unlike anything I have seen in my adult lifetime. The result is deep financial damage to thousands and thousands of people.

Mr. President, I hope somewhere somebody is listening. I thank the Chair and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, leadership indicates to me they wish to adjourn for the evening momentarily. I don't know if they have other matters to wrap up. I am certainly not going to hold the body here. We will come back tomorrow with the status quo being in place. That is my understanding of what the agreement would be. I understand they are going to try to work through the evening to resolve this matter so we can go to the bill at some point, with some assurance.

I want to bring this to my colleagues' attention. I pointed out the horrendous

weather in July in North Dakota. This is an article that appeared in the Grand Forks Herald. It said this:

Fields of wheat, durum and barley in the Dakotas this dry summer will never end up as pasta, bread or beer. What is left of the stifled crops has been salvaged to feed livestock struggling on pastures where hot winds blow clouds of dirt from dried-out ponds.

Some ranchers have been forced to sell their entire herds, and others are either moving their cattle to greener pastures or buying more already-costly feed. Hundreds of acres of grasslands have been blackened by fires sparked by lightning or farm equipment.

"These 100-degree days for weeks steady have been burning everything up," said Walter Johnson, Steele's mayor. "I'd go for 2 feet of snow than this."

Farm ponds and other small bodies of water have dried out from the heat, leaving the residual alkali dust to be whipped up by the wind. The blowing, dirt-and-salt mixture is a phenomenon that hasn't been seen in south central North Dakota since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, Johnson said.

More than 60 percent of the United States now has abnormally dry or drought conditions, stretching from Georgia to Arizona and across the north through the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin, said Mark Svoboda, a climatologist for the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

An area stretching from south central North Dakota to central South Dakota is the most drought-stricken region in the nation, Svoboda said.

"It's the epicenter," he said. "It's just like a wasteland in north central South Dakota."

Conditions aren't much better a little farther north. Paul Smokov and his wife, Betty, raise several hundred cattle on their 1,750-acre ranch north of Steele, a town of about 760 people.

North Dakota's all-time high temperature was set here in July 1936, at 121. Smokov, now 81, remembers that time and believes conditions this summer probably are worse.

"I could see this coming in May," Smokov said of the parched pastures and wilted crops. "That's the time the good Lord gives us our general rains. But we never got them this year."

Brad Rippey, a federal Agriculture Department meteorologist in Washington, said this year's drought is continuing one that started in the late 1990s. "The 1999 to 2006 drought ranks only behind the 1930s and the 1950s. It's the third-worst drought on record—period," Rippey said.

Svoboda was reluctant to say how bad the current drought might eventually be.

"We'll have to wait to see how it plays out—but it's definitely bad," he said. "And the drought seems to not be going anywhere soon."

Herman Schumacher, who owns Herreid Livestock Auction in north central South Dakota, said his company is handling more sales than ever because of the drought.

In May, June and July last year, his company sold 3,800 cattle. During the same months this year, more than 27,000 cattle have been sold, he said.

"I've been in the barn here for 25 years and I can't even compare this year to any other year," Schumacher said.

He said about 50 ranchers have run cows through his auction this year.

"Some of them just trimmed off their herds, but about a third of them were complete dispersions—they'll never be back," he said.

"This county is looking rough—these 100-degree days are just killing us," said Gwen

Payne, a North Dakota State University extension agent in Kidder County, where Steele is located.

The Agriculture Department says North Dakota last year led the nation in production of 15 different commodity classes, including spring wheat, durum wheat, barley, oats, canola, pinto beans, dry edible peas, lentils, flaxseed, sunflower and honey.

North Dakota State University professor and researcher Larry Leistritz said it's too early to tell what effect this year's drought will have on commodity prices. Flour prices already have gone up and may rise more because of the effect of drought on wheat.

"There will be somewhat higher grain prices, no doubt about it," Leistritz said. "With livestock, the short-term effect may mean depressed meat prices, with a larger number of animals being sent to slaughter. But in the longer run it may prolong the period of relatively high meat prices."

Eventually, more than farmers could suffer.

"Agriculture is not only the biggest industry in the state, it's just about the only industry," Leistritz said. "Communities live or die with the fortunes of agriculture."

Mr. President, this is an article that was repeated in newspaper after newspaper across my State. This is a disaster that is virtually unprecedented. South Dakota is even worse. That is why we simply have to achieve a result. I again ask my colleagues, please, just give us a vote. These people deserve at least that.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I have just been told now by leadership staff they are going to do everything they can to try to get this Agriculture appropriations bill up tomorrow and that I would have an opportunity to offer an amendment and get a vote. I have been assured they are going to bend their best efforts to accomplish that tomorrow. I appreciate that effort. I hope it occurs. Of course, that was supposed to happen today.

I am also informed they want to adjourn the body for the day, and I certainly will not stand in the way of adjourning. There are many here who have families they wish to go home to, and I certainly don't want to stand in the way of that, especially with these assurances that now, once again, have been given to me that they will bend their best efforts to try to get to the Agriculture appropriations bill tomorrow and give me an opportunity for a vote.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I hereby submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report prepared by the Congressional Budget Office under Section 308(b) and in aid of Section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended. This report meets the requirements for Senate scorekeeping of section 5 of S. Con. Res. 32, the first concurrent resolution on the budget for 1986.

This report shows the effects of congressional action on the 2006 budget through September 30, 2006. The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of the 2006 concurrent resolution on the budget, H. Con. Res. 95. Pursuant to section 402 of that resolution, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. As a result, the attached report excludes these amounts.

The estimates show that current level spending is under the budget resolution by \$11.869 billion in budget authority and by \$4.030 billion in outlays in 2006. Current level for revenues is \$6.590 billion above the budget resolution in 2006.

Since my last report dated September 5, 2006, Congress has cleared and the President has signed the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2007, P.L. 109-289. In addition to providing regular defense appropriations for 2007, this act appropriated \$200 million for firefighting activities in fiscal year 2006. Those appropriations were designated as emergency requirements in 2006 and did not affect the current level totals.

This is my final report for 2006.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, October 5, 2006.

Hon. JUDD GREGG,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed tables show the effects of Congressional action on the 2006 budget and are current through September 30, 2006. This report is submitted under section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions for fiscal year 2006 that underlie H. Con. Res. 95, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2006. Pursuant to section 402 of that resolution, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. As a