

As the administration moved toward ending the CPA and transferring sovereignty back to the Iraqi people through its interim government, it became clear that it was important to maintain oversight of the multiagency reconstruction effort underway in Iraq. In Public Law 108-375, the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005, Congress decided to redesignate the CPA IG as the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, or SIGIR, with responsibility for reviewing programs funded with amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund.

The law provided, uniquely at the time, that the SIGIR report directly to both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State, and that its quarterly reports be sent directly to the Congress.

As the reconstruction effort for Iraq grew in complexity Congress asked SIGIR to review additional funding streams; it is now responsible for reviewing "all funds appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Iraq."

Since SIGIR reviews reconstruction funds expended by all agencies, it can compare the effectiveness of different agencies' practices and approaches to related problems. In addition, the frequent reorganizations of the reconstruction effort and the widespread pattern of having some agencies carry out work on behalf of others has made cross-agency reviews critical to providing accountability for expenditures. SIGIR has been able to provide precisely that type of cross-agency scrutiny.

SIGIR's productivity is notable. It has submitted 23 quarterly reports to Congress and published 4 "lessoned learned" reports, including the comprehensive account entitled "Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience." It has issued 155 audit reports, 159 project assessments, inspections, and 96 limited onsite assessments.

SIGIR's staff in Baghdad and Arlington, VA, produces timely, useful reporting to program managers, senior Department leadership, and Congress. Its quarterly reports present a comprehensive, closely documented, snapshot of the reconstruction effort and conditions on the ground to provide context for understanding progress, or lack of progress, in Iraq's reconstruction. In recent quarters, reports have included province-by-province descriptions of the status of reconstruction and the pace of political change. The audit and inspections groups work in "real time," so that managers can improve processes quickly, often before reports are formally published.

SIGIR's reviews have been extremely useful to both the administration and Congress in assessing the many challenges of the reconstruction. The performance by the SIGIR office has also been recognized by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Effi-

ciency, formerly the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, PCIE, for demonstrating integrity, determination and courage in providing independent oversight and unbiased review of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and for exemplifying the highest ideals of government services as envisioned by the tenets of the Inspector General Act.

SIGIR's auditors and investigators carry out their work under dangerous and difficult circumstances. Its employees in Baghdad, in addition to being separated from their families and living under difficult conditions, are subject to considerable physical danger. Five have been wounded by indirect fire. Today I would especially like to pay tribute to SIGIR auditor Paul Converse, who died of wounds sustained in the Easter 2008 rocket attack on Baghdad's International Zone. Mr. Converse made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country.

As my colleagues know, the reconstruction effort in Iraq suffered initially from uncoordinated and insufficient planning and has been characterized too often by poor contract oversight. The security situation in Iraq also increased the complexity of executing reconstruction projects. From its audits of specific projects such as the Basrah Children's Hospital and the Mosul Dam, to its broad reviews of thematic issues such as human capital management and contract administration, the SIGIR reports have provided a frank look at, and a better understanding of, the shortcomings, the successes, and the challenges of reconstruction.

So today I salute all the hard-working current and former staff of SIGIR, SIGIR's long-serving Deputy Inspector General, Ginger Cruz, and, of course, Stuart Bowen, who has ably served as the Special Inspector General for 6 years. Their work has been extremely influential on the evolution of reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and undoubtedly will help inform future U.S. relief and reconstruction efforts. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by this Senator.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I rise today to speak about legislation that I introduced on Friday with Senator BINGAMAN—the Land and Water Conservation Authorization and Funding Act of 2009—which would establish permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This bill makes it certain that the funds available in the Land and Water Conservation Fund—LWCF—are not subject to the annual whims of Congress, but instead that these funds are available at a steady, reliable, certain level that will allow us to protect land and water well into our future.

For over 30 years, the LWCF has been used to purchase lands from willing

sellors for the purposes of conservation. It is authorized at a spending level \$900 million per year. However, Congress has rarely approved the full \$900 million, and appropriations have varied widely. The result is a program that sometimes moves forward in fits and starts rather than with a consistent level of investment from year to year.

Even with this situation, the LWCF is an incredibly successful and important program for our land conservation needs. In Montana, the LWCF has funded the acquisition of key treasures such as the Sun Ranch in Madison County and the Iron Mask Ranch in Broadwater County. We have areas all over Montana in the pristine ecosystem of the Rocky Mountain Front that are standing in line, just waiting for LWCF funds to be available.

We cannot afford to wait any longer. We need to take steps today, this Congress, to fix this long-standing problem and establish permanent funding for the LWCF to protect Montana's resources well into the future.

WYOMING FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I wish to recognize the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation's 90 years of service. Since its first meeting, the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has advocated for Wyoming farm and ranch families in local, State and Federal policy. The organization has been a leader in advocating for low taxes, less government, multiple use, and most of all private property rights for generations. The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation provides organization, resources, and service to our agriculture community.

Among the strengths of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation is the organization of the Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Program. This program provides resources and leadership for men and women beginning their careers in agriculture. The program is laying the foundation for future leaders in Wyoming agriculture and our rural communities.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation serves as a reliable source of agriculture and business information in Wyoming. Many in Wyoming turn to Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation as the source for up-to-date agricultural news. The organization provides timely information and valuable insight into current issues facing Wyoming and America.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation members will celebrate 90 years of service at their annual meeting this week in Casper, WY. They will remember the pioneer spirit that brought together farmers and ranchers from Wyoming's counties 90 years ago. The foresight of those early members has allowed the Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation to be the leading agriculture organization that it is today.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has led the way to preserve individual