

Cassandra's life will get better. Her family's life will get better because of what the Senate did an hour and a half ago. When the President signs the bill, she will not be denied insurance for a preexisting condition. Her family will be able to pay—at a reasonable cost—for insurance so Cassandra will not have to rely on this State program that only takes care of procedures but can get the comprehensive care she and every other child in this country deserve.

That is why I introduced this amendment, and that is why Senator LAUTENBERG and I worked on this legislation.

Every year in my State, over 2 million kids are treated at Ohio's children's hospitals. Next year will be the first year that, when they leave the hospital, they will not have to worry about insurance companies denying them care based on a preexisting condition.

COMPREHENSIVE IRAN SANCTIONS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DIVESTMENT ACT

Mr. REID. I want to speak today about S.2799, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009. This important piece of legislation, which combines legislation written by Senator DODD with legislation introduced by Senators BAYH, LIEBERMAN and KYL, was passed by the Banking Committee earlier this month. It would impose new sanctions on Iran's refined petroleum sector and tighten existing U.S. sanctions in an effort to create new pressure on the Iranian regime and help stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

I know that Senator KERRY, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has been working hard, along with other colleagues, to get a UC agreement so we can get this legislation passed. I understand that we are making good progress towards reaching that goal.

As we move forward with these negotiations, I want everyone to know that I am committed to getting this legislation to the floor sometime after we return in January.

Mr. DODD. I thank the majority leader for all of his help in trying to move this legislation forward. This comprehensive sanctions legislation would arm the administration with critical tools to apply additional pressure on the Iranian regime and disrupt its proliferation and terrorist activities at a pivotal time—a time when Iran's leaders continue to flaunt the will of the international community, trample on the rights of its own people, and threaten the national interests of the United States and our strongest allies, including Israel.

It is now clearer than ever that tougher sanctions must be a key element of our comprehensive Iran strategy going forward. My primary goal with this bill is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capa-

bility. That is why this measure passed the Senate Banking Committee unanimously in October, and I had hoped that we would be able to consider it in the Senate and move toward a conference with the House before we went out for the holidays. While I would have strongly preferred that, I recognize that given the delays on health care reform, we will not now have time to do that. I am also aware that the administration continues to have some concerns about how to create incentives in the bill for countries to cooperate more closely with U.S. efforts to impose tough new multilateral sanctions. I believe we have made some progress in our discussions of recent days, and I am grateful that the majority leader has indicated his willingness to move forward on the bill as soon as possible after we return.

Mr. KERRY. I appreciate Senator REID's commitment to move forward with this legislation and his support of the progress we are making towards a UC agreement. We all share the goal of creating maximum leverage in our efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon—this is a vital national security goal of the United States, and obviously of critical importance to our allies in Israel and around the world.

I believe that this legislation has the potential to make an important contribution to that effort. Having the Senate stand united with the administration behind this legislation would send a very strong and positive signal. That is why many of us are committed to working with the administration and the bill's sponsors to craft an amendment that all can agree on. I know these discussions will be continuing during recess with the intention of reaching a mutually agreeable resolution so that this legislation can be considered as soon as possible when we get back.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES E. BRUEGGEMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the extraordinary work of First Deputy Director Charles E. Brueggemann of the Illinois State Police. Mr. Brueggeman has served with distinction for 25 years with the Illinois State Police, including as second in command of the department since April 1, 2008.

Mr. Brueggemann began his outstanding career with the Illinois State Police in 1985, serving in patrol, as well as a variety of investigative positions to include narcotics, homicides and crimes against persons. He also served during his tenure in management positions that contributed greatly to the department and community he served. Those positions included district commander, executive officer, assistant deputy director, deputy director and first deputy director.

As first deputy director, Mr. Brueggemann oversaw the agency's

five divisions—operations, forensics, information and technology command, internal investigations, and administration. He was responsible for the oversight of the director's principal advisors assigned to legislative affairs, public information, inspections and budget.

In his prior position, Mr. Brueggemann had oversight of the operations division, with wide-ranging responsibilities including patrol, investigations, homeland security and gaming. While serving in that capacity, Mr. Brueggemann was charged with coordinating a plan to reduce highway fatalities. Under his leadership, the division developed a remarkable strategy that reduced highway crashes to their lowest level in 87 years.

In other honors, he was selected in 2005 by the FBI to attend a counterterrorism leadership program that involved traveling abroad with seven other major city, State, and Federal law enforcement executives to share information and open lines of communications between different nations in the fight against terrorism. Law enforcement officials from Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, and Canada also participated.

Mr. Brueggemann received his bachelors degree from McKendree University and a masters degree in Homeland Defense and Security from the Naval Postgraduate School. Married for more than two decades to his wife Susan, they have two daughters Beth and Ali.

I congratulate Mr. Brueggeman on his retirement and thank him for his service to the people of Illinois.

SENATE PARLIAMENTARIANS

Mr. DEMINT. Madam President, one of the important officers in the Senate is the Senate Parliamentarian. The Senate rules are arcane and often vague, and the Parliamentarian is responsible for making sure they are properly applied. Our four Parliamentarians put in long, thankless hours in service to their country. They get no glory, no public accolades. They rarely get high fives for getting the rulings right, but we are always too happy to tell them when we think they got it wrong. Often our disagreement is not with the Parliamentarians, but with the precedents themselves.

The Senate often chooses to sidestep its rules, creating precedents that become loopholes in the rules, which bind the Parliamentarian in the future. We should be careful to avoid these situations because we can unwittingly trample on the right of the minority.

I want to make it clear that while I do have occasional disagreements with the Parliamentarian's office, I still believe they are doing their best to be fair and to apply the rules and precedents as they see them.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL XHACOB LATORRE

Mr. DODD. Madam President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to mark the passing and honor the service of Marine CPL Xhacob LaTorre of Waterbury, CT.

Corporal LaTorre died this week of wounds he sustained from a roadside bomb while on patrol in Afghanistan's Helmand province. He would have celebrated his 22nd birthday last Saturday.

Corporal LaTorre graduated from Crosby High School where he was active in the ROTC program. A born leader, he joined the Marine Corps in 2005. He was on his third tour of duty, having served two tours in Iraq and was awarded a good conduct citation and a Purple Heart.

In his too short time, Corporal LaTorre proved himself as a soldier and a patriot. The bravery and dedication he showed as a marine, however, was just one side of his personality. To his friends and family, Xhacob will be remembered as an outgoing and energetic young man with a kind heart, a penchant for mischief, and an infectious sense of humor.

As a young boy, Xhacob earned pocket money by going from table to table at a restaurant, charming patrons and earning a dollar for each joke he told.

That young boy grew into a man of integrity and courage. His service and his sacrifice are a credit to his parents, Daniel and Nicole. I know how proud they are of him, and I hope they know that we grieve alongside them. They, along with Xhacob's wife, Frances, and his young son, Javier, are in our hearts.

It may seem at times a sad irony that our best and brightest young men and women are the ones who go into battle and sometimes do not come home, having given their lives in service to their country. But that is what keeps our Nation strong and free.

All of us in Connecticut and across America mourn the loss of CPL Xhacob LaTorre. And none of us will ever forget the debt of gratitude we owe to him and his family.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the attached articles.

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

FAMILY AND FRIENDS SAY GOODBYE TO
FALLEN MARINE

(By Amanda Raus and Doug Greene)

Family, friends and fellow Marines went to the Chase Parkway Memorial on Wednesday to pay their respects to Corporal Xhacob LaTorre, a proud Marine dedicated to serving his country who lost his life fighting for it.

On Thursday morning, the Patriot Riders were there, with flags to salute the fallen Marine on a bitterly cold December morning.

"It is a very sad day for us," LaTorre's aunt, Carmen Lasalle, said. "May God help us all overcome such a big loss. We will make sure we all teach little Javy the same values we taught you and from Heaven where you will be resting in peace and looking after your son and wife, I hope to feel your smile."

"It's deeply moving, a debt of honor. We're indebted to him for the service he's provided to our country," said Peter Verseckas, a former Naval Reserve man on Wednesday.

LaTorre was in his third tour of duty, stationed in Afghanistan, when he was injured by a terrorist bomb in August. He lost both his legs but never lost his spirit. For four months he fought for his life with his wife, Frances, by his side the whole time.

"I got the call he was going to die at any moment. I went running, and I was there, and as soon as I got there, he died," said Frances LaTorre.

Even at the very end, LaTorre was happy. That's how his family always knew him to be. They say he was a fun-loving person who put others before himself.

"He was wonderful, he was always there for everyone. Every person that he touched was special, special to him," said his aunt, Carmen LaSalle.

The people most special and closest to his heart were his family members, especially his 18-month-old son Javier. Frances says he's already a spitting image of his father.

"He looks just like him. He does a lot of the same things his father does," she said.

"To me, it's like he never left. Seeing his son, is seeing him grow up all over again," said Xhacob's brother, Danny LaTorre.

And while they watch Javier grow, they'll remember the dedicated husband, brother, nephew, father and Marine LaTorre was.

"Everybody makes great sacrifices. He made his. I'll always honor and treasure that," said Danny LaTorre.

A funeral service was held on Thursday morning at 10:30 a.m. at the Chase Parkway Memorial. Then Corporal LaTorre will be buried with full military honors at the State Veteran's Cemetery in Middletown.

WATERBURY MARINE DIES IN AFGHANISTAN

WATERBURY (WTNH)—A Marine from Waterbury has died from wounds he received in Afghanistan, the Defense Dept said Thursday.

He's identified as Corporal Xhacob LaTorre, and he was 21 years old.

The DoD says Cpl. LaTorre died Dec. 8th "of wounds sustained while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan."

LaTorre graduated from Crosby High school in 2005. His family still lives in Waterbury.

"I know the city of Waterbury will rally in support of the family and for his dedicated service," said Mayor Michael Jarjura (D-Waterbury).

LaTorre leaves behind a wife and son.

In a statement posted on Facebook, Cpl. LaTorre's sister said "Thank you so much for loving Xhacob and for the time you all shared with him. He was unique and will always be with us."

Cpl. LaTorre was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Waterbury lowered the flag over City Hall to half staff in Cpl. LaTorre's honor.

Gov. Jodi Rell ordered all flags in the state to be lowered to half-staff until sundown after LaTorre's funeral.

"On behalf of all Connecticut residents, I extend heartfelt condolences to Corporal LaTorre's family and friends," Governor Rell said. "He made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country and our way of life, and we will honor his selfless service by lowering our flags. Corporal Latorre is truly a hero."

There was no word on funeral arrangements.

GOVERNOR RELL: FLAGS AT HALF STAFF TO
HONOR FALLEN MARINE

Governor M. Jodi Rell today ordered U.S. and State of Connecticut flags to half staff

to honor a U.S. Marine from Waterbury who was supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Cpl. Xhacob Latorre, 21, died December 8 of wounds sustained while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

"On behalf of all Connecticut residents, I extend heartfelt condolences to Corporal Latorre's family and friends," Governor Rell said. "He made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country and our way of life, and we will honor his selfless service by lowering our flags. Corporal Latorre is truly a hero."

Flags will remain at half staff until sundown on the day of Cpl. Latorre's funeral. Arrangements are to be announced.

For additional background information, please contact the II Marine Expeditionary Force public affairs office at 910-451-7200.

TRIAL OF LIU XIAOBO

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I want to briefly draw your attention to an extraordinary trial that took place in Beijing yesterday morning. Mr. Liu Xiaobo is a 53-year-old writer and social critic and one of China's most prominent advocates of democratic reform. After being detained without charges for over a year, he went on trial yesterday morning in a 3-hour proceeding closed to the public. If convicted, Mr. Liu faces up to 15 years in prison. His verdict is likely to come on Friday, Christmas Day.

What was Mr. Liu's crime?

He was tried on charges officially defined as "incitement to subvert state power." Mr. Liu's calls for open elections and free speech were viewed as a threat to the ruling Communist Party.

What precisely did he do that got him into trouble?

He contributed to "Charter 08," a political manifesto calling for human rights and the rule of law in China. The manifesto was posted on line last December and quickly gained thousands of signatures by Chinese workers, teachers, and retired party members. Its name is a reference to Charter 77, a Soviet-era petition by Czech dissidents like Vaclav Havel.

Mr. Liu's crimes are nonexistent. Yet his fate has been predetermined. In short, his trial is a travesty of justice:

Mr. Liu's 3-hour trial was closed to the public. Even his wife was not allowed to attend. She has been relentlessly harassed and unable to speak to him since March.

Officials warned Mr. Liu's supporters to stay away from the trial and not write about it online. Police detained some people who came to the courthouse to show support.

His verdict will be announced on Christmas Day. This is an obvious calculation so that the verdict's announcement will garner less international attention.

According to his brother, one of the two family members allowed in the courtroom, Mr. Liu told the judge that "if he was sent to jail, it might bring others freedom of speech."