

the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee that focuses on contracting oversight. I can stand here with certainty and tell my colleagues and America and Missourians that contract problems in the Federal Government are substantial, they are expensive, and they have to be fixed.

While we are all focused right now on trying to make the Federal Government spend less money and be more efficient, there are times that contracting problems have significant consequences beyond that of money being misspent or wasted. Sometimes contracting problems have human consequences. One example would be some of our soldiers who were electrocuted because of substandard contracting work as it relates to showers in Iraq when they were standing up for us in a military conflict.

Last summer, a problem surfaced relating to Arlington National Cemetery, and this was a contracting problem. So last summer, my subcommittee held a hearing on the contracting incompetence at Arlington and what the consequences of that incompetence were. As heartbreaking as it is, we learned that because of mismanagement of contracts at Arlington, graves had been misidentified and remains had been buried someplace other than where families had been told they had been buried. Obviously, this is a breathtaking revelation when we think about what Arlington National Cemetery means to the veterans of this country and to our Nation. It is sacred ground. It is the kind of place that America needs to know is being run well and that the remains of our heroes are being handled with the utmost deference, respect, and dignity, and certainly Americans have the right to know we are burying our heroes exactly where their families are told they are being buried.

In the committee hearing last summer, I estimated, based on what we knew at that time, that as many as 6,600 graves had been misidentified. The Army responded quickly and forcefully. I wish to recognize that Kathryn Condon, the Executive Director of the Army National Cemeteries Program, and Pat Hallinan, the Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, have been responsive and I think have been working hard to clean up this mess. However, we now have recent reports which indicate that maybe I underestimated the significance of this problem and maybe this problem is much larger than I even anticipated. At the time, when I used those numbers, people seemed to think I was exaggerating.

So we introduced a bill to make sure there is accountability as it relates to Arlington, with a number of cosponsors, including Senator BROWN, who was the ranking member of the committee at the time, along with Senator COLLINS and Senator BURR and Senator LIEBERMAN.

We introduced a bill that would aim at accountability at Arlington, requir-

ing some reporting to us in 9 months, requiring that the Secretary of the Army continue to be held accountable on this huge problem at Arlington National Cemetery.

I think now is the time to get some interim information because information has now surfaced that potentially many more graves have been mishandled. There is now a criminal investigation because we had eight urns discovered in one grave site last fall as we were working on this legislation.

While I am glad the legislation has become law, that doesn't change the urgency of the situation. I have today written to the Secretary of the Army, Secretary McHugh, and I have asked for immediate information on an interim basis about what has happened to clean up this mess at Arlington, where they are in the process, and what is the truth about graves that have been identified, have not been identified, and potentially never will be identified.

I have asked the following information of Secretary McHugh:

First, I want to know the number of grave sites that have been physically examined to identify the remains there. I want to know how many grave sites have been determined to be incorrectly identified, labeled, or occupied, and the methodology used to make that determination. I want to know immediately how many families have been contacted regarding problems with the grave sites and the number of families who have requested that those grave sites be physically examined. I want to know what the procedure is for contacting families regarding actual or potential problems with the grave sites and how these procedures have been implemented since our hearing last July. I want to know from the Army how they will be able to correctly identify all grave sites by the end of the year and the estimated costs and time required to complete an examination of that nature.

I have asked the Secretary of the Army to respond to this letter in a week. I have asked what progress they have made. This is not something we can sweep under the rug and say we have done the best we can. This is not that kind of problem. I have veterans all over Missouri who walk up to me when I am in the grocery store, when I am at the mall, wherever I am, and say: Don't give up on fixing Arlington; it is too important to all of us.

I do not want this cloud hanging over Arlington National Cemetery. I have been honored to attend funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. I compliment the Army for the job they do in terms of the Honor Guard and the dignity those services embrace. But management has a challenge. I want to make sure this does not go off the radar screen in terms of a problem that has to be fixed. It has to be fixed because of the values we embrace in this country.

I look forward to the response from the Secretary of the Army. I look for-

ward to continuing to work with Kathryn Condon and Patrick Hallinan, who I do know are trying, but this is something we have to continually be transparent about in terms of reporting to the public the progress we are making so every family member and every American, when they go to Arlington National Cemetery, doesn't ever have to wonder if they are showing respect to the hero at the grave site that is identified on the marker.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EPA AUTHORITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today—and I am staying close to the floor today—because I am very concerned that the Senate is going to vote on some very detrimental proposals for the American people which have to do with, for the first time that I can tell in history, telling the Environmental Protection Agency it no longer can enforce the Clean Air Act as it relates to carbon pollution. We know carbon pollution is dangerous, insidious, and we know that if, in fact, the EPA is stopped from enforcing the Clean Air Act, our families will suffer, they will get asthma, they will have more heart attacks and strokes, they will miss work days, and they will die prematurely. That is the primary reason I rise this morning.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I also wish to take some time to talk about a real crisis looming in front of us, which is the possibility of a Federal Government shutdown.

I have lived through a Federal Government shutdown, and I can tell you, whether you are someone who is trying to get on Social Security or Medicare, whether you are living near a toxic waste dump that suddenly doesn't get cleaned up, whether you are concerned about enforcement at the border—I could go on and on—there will be a lot of suffering.

If you are a Federal employee who works for a living, you will not get paid. Mr. President, for me, the issue is, if Federal employees do not get paid, then why on Earth should Members of Congress get paid? We are Federal employees. We work for the government at the pleasure of the people. Sometimes they are not so happy about it and they don't get much pleasure, but the fact is that we are elected and we work as U.S. Senators, and our paychecks come from the Federal Treasury. Why should we get paid if we