

and sisters after her mother died of cancer. Porsche's life ended tragically when her ex-boyfriend shot and killed her one year ago today. The 21-year-old gunman later shot and killed himself.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

NETWORKS FAILURE TO CARRY PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my displeasure and disappointment that two of the four major broadcast networks—NBC and Fox, have decided not to broadcast nationally, the presidential debate scheduled tonight between the Democratic and Republican candidates for President.

This election is likely to be among the closest national races in the last twenty years. In exchange for the use of spectrum without the imposition of a fee, broadcasters have to fulfill their public interest obligation. I do not believe it is too much to presume that showing vital news information such as a presidential debate is encompassed in a broadcaster's public interest obligation.

Instead of showing the debate, NBC is showing a divisional wildcard playoff baseball game, although they are apparently permitting their affiliates to broadcast the debate, if they so choose. Even more appalling, Fox is showing its new science fiction series produced by its own studio—Dark Angel—which I understand is particularly violent.

On Sunday, the Washington Post ran a story entitled—"Even Hits can Miss in TV's New Economy." That article outlined the enormous incentives the Networks have to air programs in which they possess a vested financial interest. I quote—

Just as a supermarket might reserve its best shelf space for its house brands, the networks have begun to favor their in house programs over shows created by others, which are often less profitable in the long term.

There it is Mr. President. Money trumps the political process once again. Fox has likely spent millions of dollars to develop and promote its new series, and NBC likely spent a significant amount of money to acquire the rights to broadcast a baseball playoff game. But Mr. President, when networks choose their own programming or sports programming over an event as significant as tonight's debate, they fail to meet their public interest obligation. Having to reschedule a baseball game or the debut of a new series created by their studios does not justify NBC or Fox precluding the public from having access to the presidential debates. I understand that one network, ABC, decided to postpone the debut of one of its new shows "Gideon's Crossing" by one night so as to air tonight's debate. That is called honoring your

public interest obligation. By choosing not to air the debates, these other networks have undermined the integrity of the political process and our democracy, and engaged in a disrespect of the American electorate.

The political process should be covered. The American people deserve such coverage. The grant of free spectrum worth billions of dollars to broadcasters comes with a public interest obligation that requires them to inform the public of issues of vital importance—not simply to do what is financially expedient.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be a cosponsor for the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999, which would authorize and expand the programs first set up under the Older Americans Act of 1965.

The Older Americans Act authorizes a series of absolutely essential services for our country's seniors. Among others, the Act provides nutrition services, legal assistance, disease prevention, elder abuse prevention, employment assistance, and numerous informational programs, including the long-term care ombudsmen. There is hardly a senior in this country that is not touched, directly or indirectly, by one or more of the provisions of the Older Americans Act. These programs have become an integral part of the infrastructure that helps keep our most experienced citizens vital and constructive members of society.

I am particularly pleased that this bill includes a much-needed new service, the National Family Caregivers Program. The major medical advances of the past 50 years have led not only to an overall aging of the population but also to an increasing proportion of the elderly who are living with chronic diseases and disabilities. Many of these infirm elderly are cared for at home, putting a severe financial and emotional strain on family caregivers. This new program will provide such caregivers with a panoply of assistive services, including provision of information, assistance with access, counseling and training, respite care, and other supplemental services (home care, personal care, adult day care).

It is absolutely essential to assist caregivers as much as possible in order to allow our infirm seniors to maintain their autonomy and sense of self-worth, to permit them to live in the company of their loved ones and in the least restrictive environment compatible with their needs. This is what our seniors fervently desire and it is the right thing to do; the likelihood that such programs will save the government money in the long run is an added bonus.

There is little time left in this session of Congress, and there are many things that must be finished before adjournment. Yet as we struggle with our

workload, I hope we can take a few minutes to find a way to pass the Older Americans Act Amendments this year, on behalf of all of our older loved ones.

MEMPHIS POLICE DEPARTMENT AND AMERICA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, two years ago this revered but relatively insulated complex we affectionately call Capitol Hill was rocked by a lone gunman who shot his way through two security checkpoints and, in a rampage, not only terrorized tourists and staff but took the lives of two dedicated U.S. Capitol Police officers who died defending them and the institution in which we all serve.

As a trauma surgeon, I am used to blood and death, but it is one thing to treat the result of violence in a hospital; quite another to walk straight into its midst in a place you'd never expect. That day brought home not only at what great risk these dedicated police officers serve, but also how much we take their service—and their courage—for granted.

But the U.S. Capitol Police are not the only ones who deserve our respect and support. Every officer, in every city and town across America, who walks a beat, patrols a street, intercepts a drug push, responds to the call of an angry neighbor or spouse, or even pulls over a speeding motorist, runs the same risk of death or serious injury from spontaneous violence that Officers Chestnut and Gibson faced that day. Each of those officers deserve our thanks and admiration, but most of all, they deserve our support.

That is why I have consistently fought for more Federal block grant funds for local police departments, as well as the flexibility to use those funds wherever they're needed most—not just to hire more police officers, but to purchase the equipment or training they need to protect not only the lives of our citizens—which they are more than willing to do—but their own lives as well.

Three weeks ago, I had the honor of meeting with the Board of the Memphis Police Association in Memphis, Tennessee—a hard-working group of law enforcement officials who represent the 1,800 police men and women who respond to over 800,000 calls annually, protecting lives and property in Tennessee's largest city.

As always, they offered many constructive suggestions about how Congress might address a variety of law enforcement issues, including the issues of recruitment and quality of life. As the people who man the front lines in the war against crime and see first-hand the challenge that faces all of us, their perspective is invaluable, and I hope to translate some of their ideas into legislation for the Senate's consideration next year.

One of the advantages of being a U.S. Senator is the opportunity to undergo

extraordinary experiences one would otherwise never have. Getting to spend time with the men and women who have made law enforcement their life's work—the officers, the sheriffs, and others—is one such extraordinary experience, and it always humbles me to witness their courage and dedication up close. They work long hours away from their families, often at great personal risk, and endure low salaries and years of stress at work and at home to make our lives safer and easier. And I, for one, wish to acknowledge the men and women of the Memphis Police Department, and all law enforcement personnel in Tennessee and across America, for the selfless work they do.

We who work every day in this symbol of democracy are fortunate, because we get to know the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police on a personal basis. We greet them every day, we witness their dedication to duty, they inquire after us and our families, they become our friends. Long after Officers Gibson and Chestnut were laid to rest, we remember still their warmth and their many kindnesses, their lives and their heroic sacrifice. Unfortunately, other officers with just as much courage and dedication to duty are not known by the people they protect. But that does not mean they should be appreciated any less.

And it is not just the people of their communities who should appreciate them. As the representatives of those people in Washington, we also must recognize America's police men and women for what they are—American heroes—and do whatever we can to support their efforts on our behalf.

GLOBAL DISASTER INFORMATION NETWORK

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise to commend employees of the many Federal departments and agencies responsible for the impressive preliminary work on establishing a Global Disaster Information Network, GDIN.

As a member of the Governmental Affairs Committee, which authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, I take a keen interest in the way in which institutions in the federal government respond to disasters. I am struck by the tremendous potential advanced technologies, including satellite imaging, the Worldwide Web, and computer data systems can play in improving our responsiveness to natural disasters.

Much of the credit is due to the visionary leadership of Vice President GORE for directing GDIN's development and for recognizing the potential for harnessing current day technologies in an unprecedented and innovative way.

GDIN represents a coordinated effort among the Nation's federal disaster agencies, intelligence agencies, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, academia, and industry, and their international counterparts, to

utilize existing and emerging information technology more effectively to provide key decision makers with information critical for reducing loss from natural disasters. As a result of GDIN, the availability of critical disaster response, recovery, mitigation and preparedness information is now greater than ever before.

Domestic disasters are estimated to cost an average of \$54.3 billion, causing 510 deaths per year. International disasters kill more than 133,000 people and cost more than \$440 billion in property damage. The added costs of widespread human suffering and political instability are incalculable.

The current capabilities of GDIN are impressive, but future capabilities and possibilities hold even greater promise. GDIN's development exemplifies the best international collaborative efforts between government and industry and illustrates the innovation possible only in this great technological age. Surprisingly, GDIN has received scant attention by the American public or the media.

Prior to GDIN, there was no common approach to accessing a single source for the broad range of information needed for natural disaster reduction or aids to help integrate information from many diverse sources. Relevant information was difficult to locate or use effectively. Disaster managers worldwide were consistently frustrated by poor telecommunications and inadequate infrastructure.

In February 1997, Vice President GORE wrote to key Federal departments and agencies requesting a feasibility study for establishing a global disaster information network, through the integration of the Internet and other emerging technologies, to improve preparedness and responsiveness to natural or environmental disasters. A Federal task force was formed to explore public/private partnerships to make the concept a reality. In April 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13151, formally creating GDIN and setting operational objectives.

A key objective of GDIN is to promote the United States as an example and leader in the development and dissemination of disaster information, both domestically and abroad, and to seek cooperation with foreign governments and international organizations. Continued Federal leadership is essential to its continued success. The creation of a highly sophisticated and widely distributed knowledge base, encompassing common systems of measurements, methods of data visualization and exploitation, information analysis, event forecasting, knowledge modeling, and data and information management, remains key to successful future development.

For example, in 1997, the region of Grand Forks, North Dakota suffered losses greater than \$400 million when the Red River rose. In order to predict flood areas accurately, we need a sys-

tem that can overlay information not only on water levels and rates but also the surrounding infrastructure of levees and roads, which affect the flow of water.

A positive example of data integration was in the 1996 fire in Mendocino, California, in which data from the Landsat Thematic Mapper, Digital Elevation Models, infrared scanners, information from National Technical Means, and field reports were used to assess fire damage, as well as the potential for erosion and new growth. Additional information on rangeland, wildlife habitats, and recreational needs were included to build a comprehensive plan for re-vegetation resulting in a plan by the U.S. Forest Service, which is estimated to have saved \$250 million by more efficient planting.

These are isolated examples. The program, both nationally and internationally, is still in its infancy. The information is there but the way to access it is still a work in progress. Unfortunately, on the domestic front there has been a lack of support in some circles for this program. Such lack of support is deplorable. The need to find more effective ways to respond to disasters in the United States must be above partisan politics.

We live in truly amazing times. Rapid improvements in communications, the Internet, space imagery, remote sensing, global positioning technologies, and early warning forecasting hold promise to continue to revolutionize disaster management and therefore save lives and reduce human suffering in very significant ways.

ORGANIZED LABOR AND PNTR—NOT A MONOLITHIC APPROACH

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, a week ago I met with a national workforce coalition of unions that came out in support of establishing Permanent Normal Trading Relations with China. I had encountered some of the labor leaders who belong to this coalition on several other occasions, including at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia in August. I simply rise today to note for my colleagues that organized labor in this country is not monolithic in their views on such matters as trade and protectionism.

The members of the coalition I met with last week came primarily from the aerospace industry in the Pacific Northwest, building the jet airplanes, engines, and other aerospace subsystems that are competing globally with the likes of Europe's Airbus. However, I have previously met members of this coalition that extend beyond the aerospace industry and the Pacific Northwest. They represent such traditional manufacturing industries as steel, aluminum, diesel engines, farm equipment, and rail locomotives. They