

Mr. President, let me urge Members who are going to be speaking on the F-23 to let us know and come to the floor because we are hopeful to conclude this debate no later than early tomorrow morning and to bring it to a vote. We are making every effort to see if we can agree on that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, just for a minute, because I know colleagues are waiting, it is my understanding that following the disposition of this amendment, which we hope would happen tomorrow morning, the majority leader will move to take up a hate crimes bill. The hate crimes bill is, to say the least, a very controversial piece of legislation and may deserve the debate and discussion of the Members of this body. But the fact is, it has nothing to do with the Department of Defense authorization bill. What the Defense authorization bill has a lot to do with is the training, equipping, taking care of reenlistment and retention, and all of the things necessary to defend our Nation's national security.

We are in two wars. We are in two wars, and we need to pass this legislation. So the majority leader's priority is a hate crimes bill—a hate crimes bill which has nothing to do with the Defense authorization. I hope if the majority leader does that, it will be the last time he will ever complain about an unrelated amendment being brought up by this side of the aisle.

Look, there are important amendments that need to be debated and considered on this legislation. This has to do with the defense of this Nation. So what are we going to do? We are going to tie up the Senate for a number of days. For a number of days we are going to tie up the Senate on a totally unrelated, very controversial, very emotional issue that has nothing to do with defending this Nation.

So I urge my colleagues on this side of the aisle, I urge the distinguished chairman, I urge the majority leader, let's move forward with addressing the defense needs of this country, save the hate crimes bill for another day, and do what is necessary for the men and women in our military rather than putting an agenda item that has nothing to do with defense next before this body.

I predict again that when this bill comes up, if the hate crimes bill is proposed by the majority leader and agreed to by the distinguished chairman, it will lead to a great deal of controversy and unnecessary debate and discussion on a defense bill. If the majority leader, who controls the agenda, wants to bring up a hate crimes bill, I would imagine he would be able to bring it up on his own. Instead, he wants to stick it on to the bill that the men and women who are serving in our military and are in harm's way today are depending on. It is not right. It is not the right thing to do.

I hope the majority leader and the chairman of the committee will reconsider their position and wait and bring up a hate crimes bill as a separate piece of legislation for deliberation and discussion and vote from this body and not tie it to the Defense authorization bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak on another amendment I have filed that is at the desk, but I know there is a pending amendment, so I suppose I should ask to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1528

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, this amendment I rise to speak about is numbered 1528. I am hopeful before too long it will be the pending business. I know it has now, and I believe it will, enjoy broad bipartisan support.

This amendment would increase the authorization for the Active-Duty end strength of the U.S. Army over the next 3 years by 30,000 additional soldiers. I wish to say right at the outset it is an authorization; it is not an appropriation. It says within its terms that it is contingent on a decision by the Secretary of Defense that he chooses to fill these positions, and if he does, then he has two major options.

One is to reprogram from other funds under his control to support these additional troops, and the second, of course, is to return to Congress for a supplemental appropriation.

In my opinion, for all we have said and done in expression of our concern about the stress the members of the U.S. Army are feeling and their families are feeling, based on the fact that they are carrying the overwhelming burden of the wars in which we are involved in Iraq and Afghanistan—we have done a lot to improve living conditions, to offer more support for physical and mental health services, to provide better housing for families, but this is about how much time the soldiers can be back at their home bases and back with their families. I will get to this in detail as we go on.

Last month, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees voted to give the Secretary of Defense the authority to increase the Army's end strength by an additional 30,000 soldiers for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 but not 2010, for reasons that I will describe as somewhat arcane. This new authorization will provide the Secretary of Defense with the ability to increase the size of the Army to the extent he thinks it is necessary for the national defense or for other purposes such as reducing the stress to which I have referred on our troops today.

I was privileged to introduce the amendment along with Senator THUNE, my ranking member on the Airland Subcommittee, during the Senate Armed Services Committee, as well as

Senator GRAHAM, to provide this authorization, and I am glad to be joined in introducing this amendment No. 1528 with my bipartisan group, including the two formerly mentioned Senators, and others.

This amendment would extend this authorization where it logically must begin to fiscal year 2010 beginning on October 1 of this year, 2009. We introduced this amendment because it will provide our soldiers with the reinforcements they will need to execute the missions we as a nation have sent them on. Indeed, our soldiers will be under even more stress in the coming months because of this fact. As we begin the responsible strategy for drawdown in Iraq based on the extraordinary success of our troops and the Iraqis in turning around the war in Iraq, we are also deploying additional soldiers under the direction of our Commander in Chief, President Obama, to Afghanistan at an even faster pace than they are returning home.

GEN George Casey, the Army's Chief of Staff, warned us in the Armed Services Committee earlier this year that the effect of these two facts—a slow and methodical drawdown in Iraq of our Armed Forces, Army, and an increase in deployment to Afghanistan—means that the total number of soldiers deployed to combat will be increasing through the rest of this calendar year and into the next.

As General Casey said to us, this matter of dwell time, which I will speak about in more detail in a moment, is a matter of supply and demand: How many soldiers do we have, and what is the demand for them in the battle zones, the war zones.

GEN James Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently confirmed the critical challenges the U.S. Army will face in the near term and the importance of increasing Army Active Duty end strength. Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee just last week, General Cartwright said:

There is that period of 2010 and 2011 in particular where that stress is going to be there. During 2010 because of execution, and in 2011 because [units will be] coming back, refilling and trying to retrofit. You're going to have stress on the Army in a significant way.

And I add, stress on the Army means stress on the families of those who serve us in the Army.

General Cartwright continued by stating that the Joint Chiefs of Staff are working with the Army to find a range for growth that would reduce this strain on the service. "We have looked at this, we have worked in a range"—and I add here of increasing Army Active Duty—"from about 15,000 to 25,000 . . . 30,000 would give us the range in which to work to allow us to do that."

That is exactly what this amendment would do, give the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs, and the Secretary of the Army the latitude to increase the Army temporarily by as



much as 30,000. Why? To increase the dwell time. That is the time our troops can spend at home and, thereby, reduce the stress in a most significant way imaginable.

I deeply appreciate that General Cartwright would speak so clearly about the Army's requirements of additional soldiers in the coming months and how hard he and Secretary Gates are working to support our troops. I believe it is our duty to make sure they have all the authority required to do so.

Let me speak more about what dwell time is. Dwell time is time soldiers have between Active Duty deployments, time they spend recovering and preparing for their next deployment and, most significant to our soldiers, I would guess, precious time they can spend at home with their families. This dwell time ratio for many of our soldiers today is little more than 1 to 1, which means they have but 1 year at home for every year they spend in the theater. Everyone agrees—everyone agrees—that this dwell time is absolutely unacceptable. It may also be unsustainable.

When General Casey testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this year, he said it is his goal to get to a point where we have at least 2 years back home for every year our soldiers spend deployed. In fact, he said his ultimate goal at which he believes the Army would be most effective would be to have 3 years at home for every year in the field.

General Casey hopes that a responsible drawdown from Iraq will allow him to achieve that goal. I share the general's hopes. But, frankly, I do not believe we can bet the well-being of our Army on them without providing authority to the Army and the Secretary of Defense to expand the troops to reach those dwell-time goals of at least 2 to 1 about which General Casey talked.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen, told our committee this year that the "light at the end of the tunnel" is still more than 2 years away for the Army, and that is only if everything goes according to plan in Iraq. I believe that 2 years is too long to wait, especially when we can take steps now to turn on the light, if you will, to provide our soldiers with the reinforcements and relief they need.

I think it is important for my colleagues to know this amendment has the strong support of many of our soldiers and those organizations that fight for them.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two letters, one from GEN Gordon Sullivan, president of the Association of the U.S. Army, and, second, from ADM Norbert Ryan, writing on behalf of the Military Officers Association of America.

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

ASSOCIATION OF  
THE UNITED STATES ARMY,  
Arlington, VA, July 13, 2009.

HON. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN,  
United States Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LIEBERMAN: On behalf of the more than 100,000 members of the Association of the United States Army, I want to thank you for your floor amendment to S. 1390, the FY 2010 Defense Authorization Act, which would provide authority to increase Army active-duty end strengths for fiscal years 2010 through 2012.

As you know, the troop increases in Afghanistan will precede decreases in Iraq, causing the number of deployed soldiers to increase into next year. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testified to Congress that it will be difficult to increase dwell time at home over the next 18 to 24 months with our current end strength. Factor in the more than 30,000 soldiers who are on the rolls but not deployable, and it's obvious what a strain that would be to our current troop levels. You get this, and I hope your floor amendment will help your fellow Senators see it, too.

The Army is in dire need of sufficient troops to increase dwell time for active duty soldiers, increase support for operational missions, and help the Army achieve reorganization objectives. Thanks to your recognition of this gap in end strength planning, we have a chance at giving the Army the resources our Soldiers deserve.

We say that we want to ease the stress and strain on soldiers and their families, and now is the time to do the one thing that will provide immediate relief. Your actions to make this a reality show that you are a true ally to the Armed Forces. Thank you for introducing the Lieberman Amendment to S. 1390 which will authorize the Army to increase its size now. I hope that your fellow Senators also lend their support to your worthy cause.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN,  
General, USA Retired

MILITARY OFFICERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA,  
Alexandria, VA, July 10, 2009.

HON. JOE LIEBERMAN,  
U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LIEBERMAN: On behalf of the 370,000 members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), I am writing to express MOAA's strong support for your proposed FY2010 Defense Authorization Act amendment that would authorize an additional 30,000 end strength increase for the Army in FY2010.

Today's combat forces and their families are paying a terrible price in family separation and stress for our past failure to grow our armed forces at a pace sufficient to accommodate the extraordinary wartime deployment requirements of the past seven years.

For years, we have relied on the patriotism, dedication, and resilience of our men and women in uniform to bear 100% of the nation's wartime sacrifice. But with thousands experiencing their third or fourth combat tour since 2001 and the prospect of a decade of persistent conflict ahead, reasonable leaders must take responsible action to ease the extreme strain our military members and families have been required to absorb for so long.

Your amendment recognizes that the only way to do so in the face of increasing deployment requirements in the near term is to authorize a substantial increase in Army end strength for FY2010.

MOAA applauds your strong and persistent leadership in pursuing this important per-

sonnel readiness initiative, and we pledge to do all we can to ensure it is sustained in the final defense bill.

Sincerely and with deep gratitude for your leadership,

NORBERT RYAN.

Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. President, General Sullivan is a retired former Chief of the U.S. Army, a great American soldier. I quote, briefly, from his letter to me about this amendment supporting the amendment:

As you know, the troop increases in Afghanistan will precede decreases in Iraq, causing the number of deployed soldiers to increase into next year. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testified to Congress that it will be difficult to increase dwell time at home over the next 18 to 24 months within our current end strength. Factor in the more than 30,000 soldiers who are on the rolls but not deployable, and it's obvious what a strain that would be to our current troop levels. . . . I hope your floor amendment [and the debate of it] will help your fellow Senators see [that].

The Army is in dire need of sufficient troops to increase dwell time for active duty soldiers, increase support for operational missions, and help the Army achieve reorganization objectives.

He concludes:

We say that we want to ease the stress and strain on soldiers and their families, and now is the time to do the one thing that will provide immediate relief.

And that is to increase the authorization of the U.S. Army end strength as the number of troops it can have actively deployed by 30,000 and to fill that 30,000 increase.

Second, Admiral Ryan, another distinguished servant of the United States, a patriot, says:

On behalf . . . of the Military Officers Association of America . . . Today's combat forces and their families are paying a terrible price.

This is a very personal letter. I will start again.

Today's combat forces and their families are paying a terrible price in family separation and stress for our past failure to grow our armed forces at a pace sufficient to accommodate the extraordinary wartime deployment requirements of the past seven years.

For years, we have relied on the patriotism, dedication, and resilience of our men and women in uniform to bear 100 percent of the Nation's wartime sacrifice. But with thousands experiencing their third or fourth combat tour since 2001 and the prospect of a decade of persistent conflict ahead, reasonable leaders must take responsible action to ease the extreme strain our military members and families have been required to absorb for so long.

And then he says:

[This] amendment recognizes that the only way to do so in the face of increasing deployment requirements in the near term is to authorize a substantial increase in Army end strength for FY2010.

That is exactly what this amendment would do. The authority provided in the amendment is temporary in nature and will expire in 2012. We hope and pray that by that time, we will be able to return the Army end strength to 547,000. If Congress increases the end strength of the Army now, as this



amendment would authorize, we would be able to reevaluate that judgment on conditions on the ground and in the world justify.

I say, in conclusion, again, there is no money attached to this amendment. This gives authority to the Defense Department to raise the Army end strength, the number of troops on Active Duty by 30,000. If Secretary Gates decides, in his judgment, it is necessary to do in our national interest, then he will either have to come back and ask us for the money to do so or he will reprogram funds that are now under his control.

I ask my colleagues for their support when this amendment comes up, and I hope it comes up soon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

#### COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, President Obama was in Warren, MI, today, and a little while ago he made an announcement. He announced a new \$12 billion national community college initiative. That sounds very good at first. As a former Governor and Secretary of Education for the United States, I am a big fan of community colleges. I think they are our secret weapon for helping men and women in this country go from one job to the next and to improve our workforce.

But I respectfully suggest that what the President, his Education Secretary and his economic advisers—and I think his Education Secretary may be his very best appointee of all—I say this with respect, I think they ought to be asked to stay after school at the community college and write on the blackboard 100 times that in a year in which we have run the Federal deficit up by another \$1.8 trillion, I will never again add another penny to entitlement mandatory spending. Then I think we in the Congress, as we legislate this year, ought to do some truth in lending. To do that, we would have to put a little card with every 1 of the 15 million student loans, if the President's proposal goes through, and say: The interest you are paying on the money you are borrowing is almost all being used to pay for somebody else's scholarship in the President's community college initiative.

I think it is important to say that because, as good as it sounds to say: Let's help the community colleges, I am afraid this is a familiar refrain we have been hearing from the White House for the last 6 months. Instead of reducing entitlement spending the President is again adding to mandatory spending. Entitlement spending, which is driving up our debt to unbelievable numbers, a situation where the President's proposal for the next 10 years is more new debt than we spent, three times as

much money as we spent in World War II. This is one more Washington take-over, in addition to banks and insurance companies and car companies and maybe health care. It is now the student loans of the country.

It also changes the way we fund higher education, which is usually to take almost all our money and give it to students in Pell grants and student loans and let them choose the college, rather than to give grants the way we do with K-12.

Let me take a few minutes to explain why I am saying this. The idea the President has is to spend \$2.5 billion for community college facilities, buildings. Every State has community colleges. One of our major jobs as governors and state legislators is to fund those community colleges. Traditionally, the Federal Government gives scholarships, and the Pell grants often pay for almost the entire tuition at a community college, making them very important to American students. But this moves the Federal Government into construction and renovation of community colleges, as well as \$9 billion for competitive challenge college grants to increase graduation rates and \$500 million for online curriculum. So the choice is, instead of more money for Pell grants and administration of student loans, we are going to spend it on direct grants to some community colleges. In other words, we are going to start funding higher education, community colleges, in the way we fund kindergarten through the 12th grade.

Despite the fact that higher education is by far the best in the world, the most admired system—and one reason is because we don't have a lot of Federal direct programs for it; we give the money to students, they choose the school—we are going to start doing it more like K-12, which is not the most admired system in the world.

The \$12 billion would be paid for out of savings from the regular student loan program we have now because under the President's plan all new student loans would go through the U.S. Department of Education. So let's take that idea first.

We have about \$75 billion in student loans every year. That is a huge bank. Fifteen million students borrow money for student loans. Twelve million of them borrow through 2,000 different institutions—banks—and spend the money at 4,000 institutions of higher education. Three million choose to go through the government, where they get a direct loan directly from the government.

I was the Secretary of Education when this program was created. I didn't see any reason for the Direct Loan Program because I didn't think the U.S. Department of Education ought to be a bank. I thought the Secretary of Education ought to be trying to be the educator of the year, not the banker of the year. But the argument is, well, we can borrow money more cheaply in the government. We can

borrow it for a quarter of 1 percent and then we can loan it out at 6.8 percent to students. Banks can't do that. So we will do it, and we will take it over and do it all here. We will do all 15 million loans from the U.S. Department of Education. We will be the banker of the year.

Mr. President, the Federal Government is getting real busy. This is becoming the national headquarters for automobiles, where we own 60 percent of General Motors; we are running a bunch of banks; we run some insurance companies; we are talking about a government-run health care program; and now we are going to take over and make a huge national bank out of the U.S. Department of Education. The reason is because we can borrow money more cheaply here.

Well, why don't we just abolish all the financial institutions in America and say: We can borrow money more cheaply than you can, so you go away and we will do it all.

That is not the American way. In fact, most Americans would like to get the government out of the car business, out of the banking business, and out of the insurance business. I can guarantee you that as soon as 15 million students start lining up outside the U.S. Department of Education to get their student loans, instead of going through their local banks and dealing with their local universities, they are not going to be very happy about this either because they have had a choice for nearly 30 years, and they have chosen to go to their private lenders.

So that is the first problem. We are canceling the choice that 12 million students are exercising this year to get a federally backed student loan from a bank even though they could have gotten a student loan directly from the government.

Then we are saying: All right, because we are canceling that, we are saving \$94 billion and we have money to spend. Well, in the first place, that is not right, Mr. President. By my calculation, according to the Congressional Budget Office estimate of what it costs to operate the current Direct Loan Program, it will cost about \$32 billion over the next 10 years, at least, to operate the entire student loan program out of the U.S. Department of Education.

My common sense tells me—and I have thought this for years—that there is not any way a group of educators in the Department of Education—a relatively small department—are going to operate more efficiently than banking institutions across America in making loans. That is not their business. They know about scholarships and graduation rates, not about being bankers. My common sense tells me that, and I think it does most Americans. Plus, we have a free market system, or at least we did, where we try to get things out of government, not into government.

So that is the proposal. Yet \$2 billion of the dollars over the next 10 years are