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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I join my good friend, the Senator from California, in paying tribute to a remarkable young woman from Lakeport, CA, Marla Ruzicka.

There are times when we are called upon to give speeches such as this on the floor. They are never easy. Sometimes they are speeches given about someone at the end of a long and full life. Here we are speaking about a young woman at the beginning of a life already full but with promise for decades to come.

Marla was the founder of a humanitarian organization called Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict which is devoted to helping the families of Afghani and Iraqi citizens who have been killed or suffered other losses, such as their homes destroyed, businesses destroyed, and people injured or maimed by U.S. military operations. We know such suffering occurs no matter how careful the military may be.

But Saturday, Marla died in Baghdad. She died from a car bomb, a car bomb not directed at her but directed at a convoy. She was doing the work she loved and which so many people around the world admired her for. She was on her way to help somebody else. It was the case of being at the wrong place at the wrong time. But it was not unusual because she had risked her life so many times in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I met Marla 3 years ago when she first came to Washington. She was barely 26 years old. She had been in Afghanistan. She had seen the effects of the U.S. bombing mistakes that destroyed the homes and lives of innocent Afghani citizens. In one or two incidents, wedding parties had been bombed. In others, the bombs missed their targets and instead destroyed homes in the neighborhoods.

I remember one incident she spoke of where every member of a family—16 people—was killed except a young child and that child’s grandfather. These were the cases Marla spoke about. She spoke about them passionately because she felt passionately that the United States should help those families put their lives back together.

She met with me. She met in my office with Tim Rieser, who works on appropriations for me in the Foreign Operations Subcommittee. It did not take her long to convince either Tim or myself that she was so obviously right. We knew we not only had a moral responsibility to those people who had suffered because of the mistakes of the United States, we also had an interest in mitigating the hatred, the resentment toward Americans that those incidents have contributed more than $8 million for medical assistance, or to rebuild homes, provide loans to start businesses, and provide other aid to innocent Afghan victims of the military operations.

From Afghanistan, Marla went to Iraq. She arrived, as I recall, a day or two after Saddam’s statue fell. She and her Iraqi colleague, Faez Ali Salem, who died at the same time, the same place as Marla, organized dozens of Iraqi volunteers to conduct surveys around the area and the Iraqi victims. Then she returned to Washington and again her efforts—I have to emphasize, her efforts, her personal efforts, her pounding on doors, her going person to person with her irrefutable evidence and her heart for a program now known as the Civilian Assistance Program which has provided $10 million to the families and communities of Iraqi citizens killed by the U.S. and other coalition forces—another $10 million to the families last week—all by this happy, young woman you see depicted here, sitting with the people she helped.

To my knowledge, this is the first time we have ever provided this type of assistance to civilian victims of U.S. military operations. It would never have happened without the initiative, the courage, the incomparable force of character of Marla Ruzicka.

In my 31 years as a Senator, I have met a lot of accomplished people from all over the world, as all of us do—Nobel Prize recipients, heads of State, people who have achieved remarkable and even heroic things in their lives. I have never met anyone like Marla. She made sure we knew what she was doing and how we could help. Tim Rieser received an e-mail from her within an hour of the time she was killed. He sent it on to me during the middle of the night, Saturday night, with the photographs of Marla and the thank you she had helped.

I know how both my wife Marcelle and I felt, looking at those pictures, knowing we would never see another. There are so many stories about her, and some of them are being recounted now in the hundreds of press articles that have appeared in just the past 48 hours.

One story I remember the day after Marla arrived in Washington from Kabul. She had heard there was a hearing in the Senate where Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks were going to testify. Thinking, perhaps a bit naïvely, that they might talk about the problem of civilian casualties, she decided to go hear what they would say. After the hearing was over, obviously disappointed that the issue she cared so deeply about hadn’t even been mentioned, Marla walked straight up to Secretary Rumsfeld and general Franks and started talking to him.

He heads down the hallway; she heads down the hallway with him. I can imagine what the security people felt. She followed him to his car, and she did not stop talking to him about the families of civilians she had met who had been killed and injured and the need to do something to help them.

Anybody who knew Marla can see that. Secretary of Defense? Secretary of State, Senator, it didn’t make any difference. She had a story to tell and, by golly, you were going to hear that story. You couldn’t run down the hall, you would go to the elevator, but you were going to hear her story. She was not someone who was easy to say no to.

Not easy? It was almost impossible to say no to her. That was not simply because she was a very insistent person who come to our offices. We have all developed ways to say no. But in her case, she was not just insistent, she was credible. She had been there. She knew what the war was all about. She had seen the tragic results, and she was not about blaming anyone. She wasn’t there to blame others. She just said: Look, there are people who need help, I want to help in whatever way I can.

That was what made it different. She saw her work as part of the best of what this country is about. It was the face of a compassionate America she believed in. She wanted the people of Afghanistan and Iraq to believe in the America she believed in, a compassionate, humanitarian face.

It took time for some of us to realize she was not just a blond bundle of energy and charisma, which she was, but she was also a very determined and courageous person who realized she wanted to help more victims. It wasn’t enough to protest; that you can do easily. She needed to work with people who could help her do it. Of course, that meant the Congress, the U.S. military, the U.S. Embassy, the press, everybody else involved. She understood that. So she put aside politics and focused on the victims. But she made sure the Congress, the U.S. military, the U.S. Embassy, the press and everybody else heard from her. It didn’t take long before the U.S. military saw the importance of what she was doing and they started to help. There were several civil affairs officers with whom Marla worked as a team, and the military did the same for them and the cases. They would arrange for the plane to airlift a wounded child to a hospital or some other type of assistance. She became one of our most beloved ambassadors because she was direct. She was honest. She was not someone who was going to do—put the good face, the humanitarian face, the loving and caring face of America first and foremost.
I think one of the reasons so many people around the world feel Marla’s loss so deeply is because we saw how important her work was, and that meant taking risks the rest of us are unwilling to take. In a way, she was not only helping the families of Iraqi war victims—victims who had helped her, and who finally she had helped—but she had become an innocent victim of war herself. Yesterday, my phone rang so many times, people calling from Baghdad, calling me at home. Every one of them had a different story of someone they had lost, some way in which they had made somebody’s life different. She has been called many things: an angel of mercy, a ray of sunshine in an often dangerous and dark world.

One person who knew her well described Marla as being as close to a living saint as they come. I suspect that is how many of us feel. She probably didn’t feel that way herself. Many of us feel that way.

I don’t think I have ever met, and I probably will never meet again, someone so young who gave so much of herself to so many people and who made such a difference doing it. Our hearts go out to her parents, Cliff and Nancy. I talked to her father yesterday. I said: Think how much she did in her short lifetime, more than most of us will get to do in a lifetime. But I thanked them for having the courage to let her be the person she wanted to be—not that I suspected anybody could have stopped her from what she wanted to do.

One of the articles talks about her going to a checkpoint and the guard stopping her and she didn’t have the proper papers. She stuck her head forward and pulled back the hair. They saw the blond hair. She started talking to them about why she had to go here and there. Next thing you know, she is being sent on her way.

So our job is really to carry on the work Marla started not just in memory of a wonderful and heroic young woman, although that should be enough reason, because the work is so important. That is what I am committed to. I know I will work with my friend from California to honor Marla in that way. I think it would be safe to say to my friend from California, I suspect there will be others in this Chamber who will do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank Senator LEAHY, from the bottom of my heart, for his words about this extraordinary young woman; more than that, to him and his staff for believing in her. That took a leap of faith, that a woman so young could come in and present as compelling a case as she did.

Of course, she went right to the Senator, that is for sure, because of the work she had done for human rights in the world. She told us what she was doing. But you heard her and Tim and you rolled up your sleeves and created a program that the entire Senate backed up and the entire Congress backed to help the innocent victims of war—those who are unfortunately sometimes called “collateral damage”; we have names for that.

Clearly, what Marla did, by recognizing what a lot of us need help, the work she was doing God’s work. But she also, as the good Senator pointed out, was helping the United States of America because we are in the battle for the hearts and minds of the world. Marla understood that.

AMENDMENT NO. 444

Mrs. BOXER. Before I make further remarks, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be temporarily laid aside so I can call up amendment No. 444.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from California [Mrs. BOXER], for herself and Mr. BINGHAM, proposes an amendment numbered 444.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To appropriate an additional $35,000,000 for Other Procurement, Army, and make the amount available for the fielding of Warlock systems and other field jamming systems

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

DEPLOYMENT OF WARLOCK SYSTEMS AND OTHER FIELD JAMMING SYSTEMS

SEC. 1122. (a) ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR OTHER PROCUREMENT, ARMY.—The amount appropriated by this chapter under the heading “OTHER PROCUREMENT, ARMY” is hereby increased by the amount of such increase designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 402 of the conference report to accompany S. Con. Res. 85 (108th Congress).

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this chapter under the heading “OTHER PROCUREMENT, ARMY”, as increased by subsection (a), $60,000,000 shall be available under the Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities (TIARA) program to facilitate the rapid deployment of Warlock systems and other field jamming systems.

Mrs. BOXER. My amendment would increase funding for jamming devices that would deactivate roadside bombs. They are one of the leading causes of the casualties in Iraq.

Mr. President, I will get back to the tribute I want to give to Marla. I thank Laura Schiller, my staff member, who is sitting here with me. She helped me put together these remarks. She was a friend of Marla’s, and it was very hard for her to get through writing these remarks.

This morning, in northern California, where I was—just got here—people woke up to the San Francisco Chronicle’s front page. It is this magnificent picture of Marla and a little girl she helped, along with an Iraqi woman who had clearly also been working with this little child.

It is interesting because on either side of this beautiful photograph of Marla and this little girl are two very negative stories about the world we live in. Medicare companies trying to lower their taxes in light of their highest profits ever—and it just spoke to me about Marla because there she was in the middle of all these negative forces, the worst kinds of negative forces—war, hatred, sectarian violence, all these things, there she was right in the middle, something good for us to cling to.

My heart breaks for Marla’s family and her friends. Some of them were here, so many whose lives she touched. One of Marla’s friends was my daughter Nicole who called me with the news of Marla’s death on Saturday night. It was hard to understand her at first, so much of our lives serving other people in the way that truly makes a difference? How many 28-year-olds can say that?

Imagine, in this the most powerful and greatest country in the world, it was this remarkable woman who went down the door of a civilian victim, when nobody else would. It was this young woman who lobbied the Senate for assistance for these families, and we heard from Senator LEAHY about how incredible she was when she made the case. She risked her own life to make sure they received the support they deserved.

“Marla was something close to a saint,” one friend wrote this morning. “I can’t imagine what it was like to be her.” I personally met Marla for the first time recently when she and her mother came to my home in California to celebrate an occasion for my daughter. When Marla walked through our front door with her mother, I knew she was a saint. She had a confident smile, and my daughter’s face lit up. “This is the amazing woman I’ve been telling you about, Mom,” she said.

This is how it always was for the people around her. She had enough to call Marla a friend. It didn’t matter if you lived in the streets of Baghdad or the dusty villages of Afghanistan or the corridors of power in
Washington, DC. It didn’t matter whether you knew Marla. She would come up to you and you would feel as if you had known her for a lifetime.

She treated every conversation as a chance to tell you about the righteousness and the humanity of those whom she cared for, and she treated everyone with the same respect, openness, and unconditional love.

We so often hear:

And now three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

My office was flooded today with e-mails from the people whose lives were touched by Marla’s faith, hope, and love. Everyone has a story to tell, and I brought a few photos to share with you because words are not enough.

In this photo she sent hours before her death, we see her holding tightly an Iraqi child who was thrown from a vehicle just before it was blown up in a rocket attack. The child’s entire family was killed. Marla saved that child.

Here we see one of the countless civilians brutally injured and now beaming and healthy next to the person, Marla, who helped her heal.

We see Marla’s trusted Iraqi colleague, Faiz, whom she wrote, “was sent to me by angels from the sky. She worked tirelessly beside her, and he died bravely beside her.

And we see this beautiful, vibrant, young woman, red scarf around her neck, surrounded by the soldiers she befriended and entreated in her quest to help Iraqi civilians. Senator LEAHY made the point that everyone wanted to help Marla—everyone. The U.S. military wanted to make up for the damage that was caused. They desperately wanted to do that, but they needed someone who could give them accurate information, and she did that.

Inside the green zone—

One friend wrote last night—

she would encourage military officers and U.S. officials to hug each other—just to remember that they were still human, and re-ward them with a big smile if they actually did it.

There are many other pictures that her friends wanted to share of a woman who was a great friend to all and a beloved Ambassador for the United States at a time when our actions may not be so popular.

There were images of the notes she sent, when their spirits were at their lowest, of how beautiful they are, how much work mattered, how much she cared.

I think we are going to leave this picture up because it is exquisite. There are other pictures of Marla sleeping on the floor for nights on end so she could use her limited resources to help Iraqi victims. Behind her happy-so-lucky demeanor, there was a picture of an effective advocate cornering a Defense Secretary, a general, or, yes, a U.S. Senator, and refusing to go away until our country helped care for the innocent victims of war.

There was a picture of the room full of journalists waiting that last night for their host to show up for another party she had planned to buy their spirits, and no doubt try to persuade them to write about the victims she saw suffering terrible damage—not collateral damage but critical damage.

Days later, in her obituary for the Wash-ington Post, she talked about her most recent discovery—that the U.S. military was counting Iraqi civilian casualties in some places, despite its claims to the contrary. She ended with these words:

... To me, each number is a story of someone whose hopes, dreams, and potential will never be realized, and who left behind a family.

The same can be said of Marla. Her hopes, her dreams, and her potential will never be realized, and she left behind a family. In all the years I have lived, I do not know too many people who have made an impact the way she has in those 29 short years. But I guar-antee you, if Marla were here, she would not want us to weep, she would not want us to hide our heads. She would want us to keep fighting for the people and causes she had championed even before she was old enough to drive a car. She would want us to listen to the words of encouragement and action she sent constantly to friends and col-leagues. Once she wrote, “Their trage-dies are my responsibilities,” and now her work must be ours.

I hope a message goes out to the suicide bombers to stop what they are doing, to stop it now, and to those who would put together those roadside bombs to stop it now because everyone who is injured by this—everyone—has hopes and dreams and families and poten-tial.

So her work must be ours. She was the voice of these victims to whom no one seems to pay much attention. We need to be her voice now.

And now these three remain: Faith, hope and love: But the greatest of these is love.

Mr. President, may we join the grieving Ruzicka family and thousands around the world in paying tribute to a young woman of great faith, hope, and love by finishing the work she so cour-ageously began and by working to make sure this war will soon come to an end.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. First, I commend my colleagues from California and Vermont for recognizing such a remark-able woman, someone who rep-resents everything that is good and peaceful about America and who set an example in such a tumultuous time and place but clearly giving all of the love she had to give at a time when it was needed the most. I thank my col-leagues for taking the time to recog-nize that.

AMENDMENT NO. 48

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to lay aside the pending amendment, and I call up amendment No. 48.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mrs. LINCOLN] proposes an amendment numbered 481.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be waived with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the accumulation of leave by members of the National Guard)

SBC. 1122. Section 701a of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “In the case of a member of the Army National Guard of the United States or the Air National Guard of the United States who serves on active duty for more than 179 consecutive days, full-time training or other full-time duty performed by such member during the 5-year period ending on the 180th day of such service under a provision of law referred to in the pre-ceding sentence, while such member was in the National Guard as a member of the National Guard, and for which such member was enti-tled to pay, is active service for the purposes of this section.”

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer an amendment of great importance to the returning guardsmen and reservists in my home State and in many other States. I think many of my colleagues may agree that what I am trying to do, will agree that it is the right approach and the right thing to do for the men and women from our States who have done such an incredible job serving our Na-tion in Iraq and on behalf of not just Americans but the Iraqi people.

When our soldiers return home, some of them are finding they might only have a week or less before they are ex-pected to report for the period and return to civilian life. It is confusing at best to know with what they are going to be faced. The price of gasoline has gone up tremendously since they de-ployed almost 2 years ago. They have seen a lot of changes in their commu-nities, perhaps changes in their work, changes in their families, the loss of loved ones, certainly the growing of their little biddies. But many of the soldiers of Arkansas’s 39th Infantry Band have found they have no leave left when they returned to our home State of Arkansas. This left them with very few options other than to return to work immediately or, in some cases, to begin looking for work imme-diately, within a week of when they returned to our home soil.

These soldiers had just spent nearly 18 months in Iraq, risking their lives to defend the freedoms we cherish as Americans. They witnessed scenes of tragedy and violence they never ex-pected to encounter but willingly ac-cepted as part of their mission in serv-ice of this great Nation. It is part of