

rigidity, the result is gridlock. That is what we have had, in large part. People would like for their public servants to perform by reaching out to each other across the aisle and bringing people together in order to build that consensus in order to govern. That has not been the main theme in the American Government in the last several years.

I hope that both the House of Representatives and the Senate are getting that message loudly and clearly from the American people. I can tell you, Mr. President, I know what Floridians are thinking. It is my business to know that. Interestingly, also, Florida is a microcosm of the Nation. People are tired of this bickering. Folks do not want a Republican or a Democratic solution; they want the right solution. If you do what is right, you can get a lot done. That is what the American people want.

Certainly, a thorny problem, such as how to bring about stability in Iraq, is going to require a bipartisan solution. It is going to take a great deal of cooperation between the legislative branch, the Congress, and the executive branch, the President. The statements that we have heard by the new majority leaders of both the House and the Senate, as well as the statements made by the President, are certainly statements in the right direction. Now we will see if those statements can, in fact, become a reality in deeds and accomplishments.

This Senator is dedicated to reaching out and building that consensus across the aisle, when you look at the enormous challenges that are facing this country in addition to Iraq—the whole war on terror, the defense of the homeland, the protection of our seaports; the stability of the U.S. budget, the attempt to bring the budget back into balance, an approach of pay-as-you-go; attending to the needs of our senior citizens, particularly senior citizens who have been lifted out of so much poverty as a result of these programs, such as Medicare and Social Security, and the protection of those programs and the proper financing of those programs; the need of the United States to address the needs of assisting State and local governments on education; the preparation for the big one that is surely to come in terms of natural disasters because, surely, we are going to have it—and the two Senators in the Chamber, both, are coastal Senators. A category 4 or 5 hit directly from the water on a highly dense urbanized area, and that will cause economic havoc that will be even over and above what we have seen, and the potential of insurance losses in excess of what we experienced in the 2005 and 2004 hurricanes that hit a lot of our Southeastern States.

When the economic loss and insurance loss hits \$50 billion, there is no one State, no one insurance company that can withstand that kind of loss. That is another challenge facing us. Then there is the straightening up of

FEMA and its ability to respond, and respond quickly, which I have great hopes under Administrator of FEMA Paulison that we are much better prepared than we were in the 2004 and 2005 hurricane cycles.

As we go down the list of the challenges that are facing this country—and there are many that I have not named—these cannot be solved as a Democratic or as a Republican solution; they have to be solved with the right solution; otherwise, you will never get consensus, particularly in the Senate. So this is my profound hope, and I want to express it to the Senate on this first day after the Tuesday election of November 7.

The message has been clear: Stop the partisan bickering. Reach out across the aisle. Bring people together with the enormous geographical and philosophical differences as are expressed in this Senate, reflecting the opinions of the people of the United States to reach out across these partisan lines and bring people together.

Mr. President, again, I appreciate the privilege of continuing my service to our country as I express this heartfelt opinion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT LIPSON

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, simultaneous with my remarks tonight at Kennesaw University Convocation Center in Cobb County, GA, there is a memorial service where thousands of my fellow citizens are paying tribute to the life, the times, and the contributions of Dr. Robert Lipson. On Saturday night, Dr. Lipson, leaving Kennestone Hospital, was killed in a tragic automobile accident with a motorcycle just two or three blocks from the health care facility to which he had dedicated the majority of his life.

Dr. Lipson was just not any ordinary doctor; he was an extraordinary human being. Dr. Lipson was president and CEO of WellStar Health Systems, the owner and operator of five hospitals in metropolitan Atlanta, in Cobb, Douglas, and Paulding Counties, the employer of hundreds of doctors and thousands of caregivers, and one of the true leaders in modern health care today in our State.

Dr. Lipson, in his time at Kennestone Hospital, did a \$68 million capital improvement with an 84-bed residential tower. He brought an open-heart surgical unit to Kennestone Hospital, and at the time of his tragic loss, Dr. Lipson's emergency room at Kennestone Hospital was the second largest emergency room in the State of Georgia and one of the largest in the United States, serving victims of tragic trauma throughout the metropolitan area.

But it wasn't only his leadership as the head of WellStar Health Systems. For 25 years prior to his appointment, he had a practice in internal medicine

in our community. He was a leader in his synagogue, Etz Chaim, and brought to that leadership tremendous involvement in our community. He was a gifted photographer. In fact, only 8 weeks ago—8 weeks before his death—his photography was displayed at Kennesaw University for all to see because of his great insight, his great talent, his credibility, and the way he had captured not only our community but all the special places in the world he visited.

So tonight on the floor of the Senate, on behalf of myself and thousands and thousands of citizens in my State, I extend to his wife, his mother, his son, and his daughter our sympathy in this tragic loss but also our pride and joy in the great contributions of Dr. Robert Lipson to the betterment of the health of countless thousands of citizens and the betterment and the health of our community.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL LANCE M. THOMPSON

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Upland, IN. Cpl Lance M. Thompson, 21 years old, died on November 15th. Lance was killed by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. With his entire life before him, Lance risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

A 2001 graduate of Eastbrook High School, Lance followed in his brother Phillip's footsteps by joining the Marines. His father, Gregory, told the Kokomo Tribune that his son had been a committed member of the Armed Forces and believed in what the Marines were doing in Iraq. Reflecting on Lance's life, his half-brother, Matt, told the Marion Chronicle-Tribune that his "motto" had been "gung-ho." This selfless dedication carried Lance through his first tour of duty in Iraq and led him back again for a second tour, which began in September of this year.

Lance was the 38th Hoosier soldier to be killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to the Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA. This brave young soldier leaves behind his wife Dawn, his father Gregory, his mother Melanie, his brother, Phillip; and his half-brothers, Matt and Alexander.

Today, I join Lance's family, his friends, and the entire Upland community in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Lance, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Lance was known for his dedication to family and his love of country. According to friends and loved ones, he also enjoyed spending time outdoors, being with children and animals, and was always making jokes. Today and always, Lance will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Lance's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Lance's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Lance M. Thompson in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Lance's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Lance.

LANCE CORPORAL JAMES BROWN

Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Owensville. James Brown, 20 years old, died on November 2 after being struck by a sniper bullet while on patrol in Al Anbar Province west of Baghdad. James risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Inspired by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, James joined the Marines after graduating from Gibson Southern High School in 2005 and was deployed to Iraq in June. He planned to marry his high school sweetheart, Jamie Coleman, when he returned home in a few months. Family friend

Kenny Dewig said James had been a leader in the Marines just as he had been a leader with his Titans high school football team, "He was just in charge of the whole squad on patrols. He was just a really good boy."

Jonathan was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, NC. This brave soldier leaves behind father James Ling of Evansville, mother Joanne Van Antwerp of Owensville, sister Carma Dart, and brother Dillen Friend.

Today, I join James's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of James, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

James was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. He was looking forward to his wedding and starting a life with Jamie. Today and always, James will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring James's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of James's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of James Brown in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope families like James's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with James.

SERGEANT BROCK BABB

Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave Hoosier from Evansville. Brock Babb, 40 years old, died on October 15 after a roadside bombing in Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

Brock risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Brock enlisted in the Marines after graduating from Reitz High School in 1984. He served in the first Gulf War and then returned home to become a sheet metal worker and raise his family. In 2004, Brock decided to reenlist, feeling that he had unfinished business in Iraq. Brock was remembered by his mother Susie as a dedicated and caring American happy to carry out his duty, when she said that he wanted to help young marines survive.

Brock was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to Marine Forces Reserve's 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division. This brave soldier leaves behind wife Barbara Babb; parents Susie and Terry Babb; and children Tanner, Zoie, and Levi Babb.

Today, I join Brock's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Brock, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Brock was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. He had only been in Iraq for 2 weeks at the time of the attack and was looking forward to helping his fellow marines. Brock's dedication and sense of duty made him a model marine and a true leader for the others serving with him. Today and always, Brock will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Brock's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Brock's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Brock Babb in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope families like Brock's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He

will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Brock.

SERGEANT KRAIG FOYTECK

Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from LaPorte. Kraig Foyteck, 26 years old, died on October 30 after being hit by small arms fire during a raid on a house near Baghdad. Kraig risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Kraig enlisted in the military at 23 in search of adventure. He had a passion for gymnastics and enjoyed parachuting. Kraig’s mother spoke of his deep sense of patriotism and commitment to his country, telling a local news outlet that the night before he left for his tour she sensed second thoughts, but her son wanted to honor his commitment. In August 2005, Kraig was sent to Mosul in northern Iraq, where his mother said he patrolled with his Stryker unit and handed out candy and toys to Iraqi children. Kraig was supposed to have finished his tour in August, but the day before leaving Iraq, he was told he would be sent to Baghdad for a few months. He was due to return in January. He had hoped to reenroll in college after being discharged from the Army and planned to study medicine.

Kraig was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, AK. This brave soldier leaves behind his mother, Connie Foyteck of LaPorte; father Rik Gutzke of Oregon; a brother, Christopher; and grandparents Virginia and Jack Foyteck.

Today, I join Kraig’s family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Kraig, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of conflict and grief.

Kraig was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country. The Army awarded him a Purple Heart in December after he broke four bones in his back, but Kraig insisted that he return to his unit. Today and always, Kraig will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Kraig’s sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln’s remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: “We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we

cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.” This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Kraig’s actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Kraig Foyteck in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Kraig’s can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Kraig.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS NATHAN J. FRIGO

Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart and deep sense of gratitude to honor the life of a brave young man from Kokomo, IN. Nathan J. Frigo, 23 years old, died on October 17 in Baqubah, Iraq. Nathan risked everything to fight for the values Americans hold close to our hearts, in a land halfway around the world.

Nathan enlisted in the Army after graduating from Northwestern High School in 2001. He is remembered as an active student and athletic leader, having lettered in both track and cross country. Nathan chose the position of infantryman and volunteered to serve a 4-year tour of duty. Nathan’s father spoke of his deep sense of patriotism and commitment to his country, saying, “He knew the risks, but he wanted to go where he was needed. He wanted to help, and he wanted to make a difference with his life.”

Nathan was killed while serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO. This brave soldier leaves behind parents Maureen and Fred Frigo and sisters Sarah and Beth.

Today, I join Nathan’s family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to bear our sorrow over this loss, we can also take pride in the example he set, bravely fighting to make the world a safer place. It is his courage and strength of character that people will remember when they think of Nathan, a memory that will burn brightly during these continuing days of grief.

Nathan was known for his dedication to his family and his love of country, having aspired since he was a child to become a member of the military. The Army announced that he has been elevated to specialist and awarded a

Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Today and always, Nathan will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to justly honor the Frigo family’s sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln’s condolences to the mother of two fallen soldiers: “I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom.” These words of comfort withstand the tests of time and circumstance, and remind us all that the impact of Nathan’s actions will live on far longer than any record of them.

It is my sad duty—and great honor—to enter the name of Nathan Frigo in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to his country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about the terrible pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Nathan’s can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Nathan.

SERGEANT 1ST CLASS SCOTT E. NISELY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to SFC Scott E. Nisely, who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving his country. Sergeant Nisely, of Marshalltown, IA, was assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division, Army National Guard, based out of Iowa Falls, IA. He was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom with the unit in September 2005 and arrived in Iraq in early May 2006. He died at the age of 48, on September 30, 2006, in Al Asad, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered small arms fire.

Staff Sergeant Nisely will be posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for the second time, the Purple Heart, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Mobilization device for the second time, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

My thoughts and prayers have been with Scott’s wife Geri and his children, Justin and Sarah, as well as all those other family and friends who are grieving his loss. Scott’s family said, “Scott was a dedicated and loving husband and father. He was actively involved in his children’s lives. He was a loyal, compassionate, and caring friend that everyone liked. He loved and was committed to God, and was very involved with his church and community.”

Learning about the sacrifice of Scott Nisely, I am reminded of the words of

John 15:13: "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

His family also said of Scott that he "loved his country and was a volunteer career service-member that was proud and honored to serve his country." Our Nation will be forever grateful for Scott Nisely's loyal service and sacrifice. His loss is tragic, but he will be remembered as an American hero.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Army National Guard SFC Scott Nisely of Nebraska. Sergeant Nisely died during a firefight with insurgents near Asad, Iraq, on September 30. He was 48 years old.

Sergeant Nisely was born in Syracuse, NE. After high school, he attended Doane College in Crete, NE, where he competed in track and cross country. He would later settle in Marshalltown, IA, with his wife Geri. In addition to his service in the Armed Forces, Sergeant Nisely also worked for the U.S. Postal Service in Iowa for 12 years.

While at Doane, Sergeant Nisely enlisted with the Marine Corps Reserve and served 22 years with the Marines on active duty and as a reservist. He was a veteran of Operation Desert Storm. In July, 2002, Sergeant Nisely accepted a demotion in rank to fill a vacancy in the Iowa Army National Guard and served in that capacity until his death.

Sergeant Nisely will be remembered for his strong faith and his desire to serve his country. In honor of Sergeant Nisely, Doane College will rename an annual track and field event the Scott Nisely Memorial Track Classic.

In addition to his wife, Sergeant Nisely is survived by his son Justin and his daughter Sarah.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring SFC Scott Nisely.

A MALL MEMORIAL FOR DR. KING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this morning, our Nation took an important step toward honoring one of our most preeminent leaders. The National Mall in Washington, DC, is graced with memorials to America's greatest presidents. Today we broke ground on a memorial to honor the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although never elected to national office, Dr. King courageously led the Nation through a crucial chapter of American history and became the voice of the entire civil rights movement.

In his famous "I Have A Dream" speech on the National Mall, Dr. King noted that "[w]hen the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir."

This past summer we reaffirmed and reauthorized one of the most important methods of enforcing this promise and

upholding the Constitution—the Voting Rights Act. Over the course of dozens of Judiciary Committee hearings and markups, we recalled the great historic struggle for civil rights led by American heroes of vision and strength, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and his widow, Coretta Scott King.

The pervasive discriminatory tactics that led to the original Voting Rights Act were deeply rooted. As a Nation, this effort to ensure equal protection dates back more than 135 years to the ratification of the 15th amendment in 1870, the last of the post-Civil War Reconstruction amendments. It took the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for people of all races in many parts of our country to effectively begin exercising the rights granted 95 years earlier by the 15th amendment. Despite the additional gains we have made in enabling racial minorities to participate fully in the political life of our country, the work of the Voting Rights Act is not yet complete, and the dream of Dr. King has not yet been fully realized. But his dream lives on, as vital and as inspirational as the day it was delivered.

Just last week, we had an historic national election. Men and women of every color and creed came to polling places around the country to have their voices heard. Nonetheless, some citizens experienced problems casting their votes. The Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a long-overdue oversight hearing this week to examine shortcomings in the enforcement of our civil rights laws and the guarantees of political equality enshrined in the 14th and 15th amendments. In doing so, we continue to honor the promissory note written to all Americans.

I look forward to bringing my children and grandchildren to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial when it is completed in 2008. I trust it will be a moving tribute befitting one of our Nation's greatest leaders.

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS ACT

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to celebrate final passage of the National Heritage Areas of 2006. I am grateful that Congress finally has recognized the Upper Housatonic Valley in Connecticut and Massachusetts for its special contribution to the American experience. This new law designates the Upper Housatonic Valley as a National Heritage Area and authorizes \$10 million to preserve its historic and cultural assets.

Today's victory has been a long time in coming. In 2000, I sponsored legislation directing the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing the Upper Housatonic Valley as a National Heritage Area. After the Interior Department completed that report, Senator DODD and I in 2003 introduced the first bill to create the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area. Last Congress, a

bill that would have created that area and a dozen others passed the Senate but died in the House. In this Congress, we reintroduced the Senate bill, and Representative NANCY JOHNSON reintroduced its House companion. Finally, after 6 years of hard work, I can stand announce that legislation to create the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area has passed the Senate and the House. The act now goes to the President, who is expected to sign it into law without delay.

The Upper Housatonic Valley's history is this Nation's history in microcosm—spanning Native American civilization, European settlement, the industrial revolution, and the present day. In contrast to many other areas of the country, the Upper Housatonic Valley's early historical and natural landscape remains largely intact. What is more, the area presents excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation, on waterways and greenways or trails, and a wide range of other activities for visitors or residents. For example, the section of the river below Falls Village, Connecticut is one of the Northeast's most prized fly-fishing centers.

This unique 950-square-mile region encompasses 29 towns in the Housatonic River watershed, extending 60 miles from Lanesboro, MA, to Kent, CT. The valley brims with more than 100 historically important sites—some dating back to pre-Revolutionary times—including five National Historic Landmarks and four National Natural Landmarks.

The Iron Heritage Trail celebrates the valley's distinctive role in iron production. During the Revolutionary War, cannons and rifles were forged for Gen. George Washington's Army from abundant local iron ore, and iron used in the USS *Constitution* also came from this area. More than 40 iron blast furnaces in the region fueled the Industrial Revolution.

Within Upper Housatonic Valley, the African-American Heritage Trail celebrates the region's significant contributions to our Nation's African-American history, including the abolitionist and civil rights movements. For example, the valley was home to Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, a pioneer in the fight against slavery, W.E.B. Du Bois, a father of the modern civil rights movement, NAACP leader Mary White Ovington, and Frank Grant of the Negro Baseball League.

The valley has produced writers, painters, sculptors, photographers, and musicians, among them Herman Melville, Edith Wharton, Norman Rockwell, Daniel Chester French, James VanDerZee, and James Weldon Johnson. These artists have left the Nation a rich cultural inheritance. Today, the region remains a vibrant center for ongoing literary, artistic, musical, and architectural achievements.

Coordinated efforts to preserve the natural and cultural resources of this region are already well underway. The designation of the Upper Housatonic