

“The attacks of September 11 brought with them the realization that our...sophisticated planes, submarines, and missiles cannot deter a terrorist attack, and cannot protect us from the unconventional attacks that we now know al-Qaida terrorists were contemplating...To the best of our abilities, we will take all precautions to deny these terrorists the opportunity to strike again.”

Herb Kohl, September 11, 2002

Defending our Nation

Herb Kohl came to Washington in 1989 as the Cold War was coming to a close and the United States was beginning to face different threats. “We had to adapt to a new set of challenges – stopping terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction,” Kohl remembers. “At the same time, we had to stop wasting money on weapons we no longer needed and could no longer afford. But most importantly, we had to stand up for our troops and veterans, who would be asked to sacrifice so much to keep us safe.”

Kohl was focused on this goal from his first year in office, when he introduced legislation to address the threat of biological weapons, such as smallpox and anthrax. This legislation closed a key loophole that made it difficult to prosecute those who manufactured or distributed the deadly bacteria and viruses in the United States. The U.S. had signed the Biological Weapons Convention to stop the spread of these weapons internationally. However, Kohl recognized at the time that “there is no law that permits the authorities to stop the weapon from being produced in the first place.” Kohl’s *Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act* made it a crime to possess a biological weapon, which was not against the law at the time.

Many were surprised to see a freshman senator taking on such a tough national security issue. “He was the new kid on the block,” said John Isaacs of the Council for a

“Passage of such legislation at this time would give a clear signal to the world that the United States is serious about controlling the proliferation of biological weapons...The legislation is timely and important.”

Assistant Secretary of State H. Allen Holmes on Senator Kohl’s Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act

Livable World. But Kohl pressed his case, won the support of senators on both sides of the aisle, and secured the endorsement of the President George H.W. Bush's Administration.

Kohl's legislation was signed into law in 1990. Since then, it has been a valuable tool that law enforcement uses to this day to stop the production of biological weapons.

Kohl also brought an early focus on counter-terrorism to Washington, redoubling those efforts after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Kohl coauthored the bipartisan *Omnibus Counter-Terrorism Act of 1995*, which went after fundraising by terrorist groups, increased FBI resources, and simplified deportation procedures for foreigners engaged in terrorism. As the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee's Terrorism Subcommittee, Kohl helped lead a major investigation into the tragic killings that occurred during a stand-off between federal agents and the family of Randy Weaver in Ruby Ridge, Idaho. These hearings took 14 days, involved 62 witnesses, and were widely praised for their bipartisan and professional nature. Kohl also organized ground-breaking hearings on other home-grown terrorist movements as well as on the disturbing availability of bomb making information on the Internet.

Yesterday America suffered an attack. A tragedy. A horror. But yesterday, America did not suffer a defeat.

Today, here in Washington, DC, in New York City, and across the country, we will continue our rescue operations, we will mourn our dead, we will call relatives and hold our families a little tighter. But we will also return to work, to school, and to our lives of freedom.

These cowardly terrorist attacks have shaken our nation, but they have not broken our nation. We awake today with a renewed resolve to protect our citizens and punish the monsters who have carried out this atrocious attack – and the countries who have opened their borders to these monsters.

We all feel uneasy today and understandably so. But, we must not allow that feeling to overcome us. If we do, it is the terrorists who prevail. Yes, we must take all the security precautions necessary to ensure that this does not happen again, but at the same time we must live our lives freely to the fullest extent possible. Our greatest revenge against the terrorists is to resume all of our activities and to demonstrate America's resilience and strength of spirit.

Yesterday was one of America's darkest days. We have lost lives, friends, landmarks, and our sense of unfettered security. But we have not lost our spirit or our will to fight for and keep our freedom. Every American, as [they] resume [their] daily activities, is part of that fight. And I have no doubt that it is a battle against terrorism and tyranny that we will win.

Senator Herb Kohl
September 12, 2001

Too often in the past, the Congress has found it too easy to say 'maybe' rather than 'no' to programs which have no essential role to play in protecting our national security.

We've all become all too familiar with the 'snowball effect' as it applies to the weapons and technologies considered by the Congress:

The snowflake of a bright idea wins congressional approval for research and development;

Money for the idea gets spread over a number of congressional districts, and contractors start packing the flakes of support into a snowball;

After a few years of increasing investments for research, we are faced with an avalanche that can roll over almost anything in its path.

Senator Herb Kohl, August 4, 1990

After September 11, 2001, Kohl went immediately to work to address the flaws in our nation's security systems – despite being displaced from his Washington office for six months after the Anthrax attacks of 2002. He built on earlier work to ban firearms that cannot be caught by metal detectors – which was supported by the National Rifle Association – with new legislation to close gaps in the laws controlling dangerous explosive materials. He pushed for expedited security training for flight attendants and championed reforms in the federal air marshal program. Recently, legislation authored by Kohl to stop illegal cigarette trafficking was signed into law – cutting off a key source of terrorist financing.

Throughout his time in Washington, Kohl drew on his business experience to reduce waste in the defense budget and introduce the Pentagon to the strong manufacturing community in Wisconsin. Kohl remembers that, "I came to Washington determined to root out waste throughout the government, and that certainly included the Department of Defense. I couldn't believe that so much money was being devoted to programs that only grew more expensive and less relevant to national security as time went by, while at the same time Wisconsin's most efficient producers were virtually ignored by the Pentagon."

Kohl opposed continued spending on expensive and unnecessary programs like the MX Missile, a Cold War relic that has since been decommissioned. Kohl also spoke out against the B-2 bomber, which cost taxpayers almost \$1 billion per plane. As the B-2 grew in cost and its nuclear bombing mission became less relevant, purchases were reduced to just 21 planes, from an initial plan to buy 132.

In 2001, Kohl's Senate colleagues recognized his

talent for separating promising defense programs from wasteful spending when he was selected to join the powerful Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, which is responsible for deciding how defense dollars are spent. Kohl used this seat to continue rooting out waste at the Pentagon while connecting the most skilled and cost-effective manufacturers in Wisconsin to defense programs that would play a critical role in protecting our national security.

One such company was Oshkosh Corporation, a manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks and a major Wisconsin employer. When roadside bombs in Iraq exposed the inadequate armor of the military's existing trucks, Kohl advocated tirelessly for the armored vehicles made in Oshkosh, called *Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicles*. Kohl refused to accept delays, and said at the time, "We should never compromise the safety of our service men and women when we have a technology that will better protect them in a war zone." Ultimately, manufacturing these trucks created over 1,000 jobs in Oshkosh, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates credited the trucks with saving "thousands of lives" in combat.

"Since his election in 1988, Senator Kohl has been a strong supporter of and instrumental to the growth of not only Oshkosh Defense, but to the entire family of Oshkosh companies. His unwavering commitment to advocating for our men and women in uniform and ensuring their access to superior equipment, such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV), has saved lives and ensured our brave service members were protected going into harm's way."

Charles L. Szews
Chief Executive Officer
Oshkosh Corporation

"As conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan drove up the need for a variety of goods, from big-ticket items like armored trucks to items such as footwear and medical equipment, Wisconsin manufacturers have been able to deliver."

"Military Contracts March into State," Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, March 10, 2011

Thank you for having us here today – Senator Carl Levin from Michigan right across the river and your own Senator Herb Kohl.

This is a happy day. We announced yesterday that we signed the contract for the next two LCSs to be built here in Marinette. So we're going to keep you folks busy for a little while....

The first ship that you built, the Freedom, deployed two years early. In its first deployment in the Caribbean, in a little bit more than three weeks, it seized almost three tons of cocaine. And the reason was that those fast boats the drug runners used would see a gray ship on the horizon and just figure they could outrun it. Well, they couldn't.

These are going to be the backbones of the U.S. Navy for the next few decades. And it's because of the skill of the workforce here – what you all have done. And thanks to these two senators – we would not be standing here today without the hard work that they did in November and December of 2010 to allow us to buy both variants – to allow us to buy the ones from here and the ones from Mobile.

And it's because you – the companies that you represent – got the price down so that we saved almost \$3 billion on buying 20 ships – 10 from here, 10 from Mobile. That's a good deal for the Navy, it's a good deal for Marinette, it's a good deal for Mobile, and it's a good deal for the United States of America.

Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Speech in Marinette, WI
March 18, 2011

Kohl was also instrumental in sparking a shipbuilding renaissance on the Great Lakes with his work to help Marinette Marine secure a contract to build the Littoral Combat Ship. This ship brings speed and flexibility to the Navy as it confronts changing threats in a new century, while costing less than larger ships such as destroyers and aircraft carriers. The Littoral Combat Ship introduces a new concept to the Navy with its mission modules – interchangeable packages of tools designed for various tasks, such as minesweeping or anti-submarine warfare. This modular design ensures that the Littoral Combat Ship will be relevant for decades to come, since changing or upgrading a mission module is a much simpler process than redesigning a whole ship.

As the Navy evaluated shipbuilders across the country to determine where Littoral Combat Ships would be built, Kohl worked with Marinette Marine to make sure their bid was as strong as possible. He knew the Navy was focused on price, and he stressed the importance of keeping costs down to Marinette Marine while also highlighting the strengths of Marinette's shipyard and workforce in frequent conversations with the Secretary of the Navy.

Both Marinette Marine and a rival shipyard submitted extremely competitive bids to the Navy, committing to fixed-price contracts to build the Littoral Combat Ship. Since these bids were stronger than expected, the Navy decided to purchase ships from both

“Senator Kohl’s business acumen and dedication to Wisconsin’s economic growth, combined with his exemplary service as a member of the highly respected Defense Subcommittee of Appropriations, helped secure the current contract to build 10 Littoral Combat Ships for the U.S. Navy at Marinette Marine. He worked tirelessly to keep the LCS program fully funded. As a result of Senator Kohl’s determination and unflagging commitment, the number of direct employees at our shipyard has grown from just a few hundred several years ago, to almost 1500 today. Under his leadership and in recognition of his tremendous contributions, LCS-5, currently under construction at Marinette Marine, was designated the USS Milwaukee by the Secretary of the Navy. The nation will miss Senator Kohl’s guidance and steadfast commitment to the public good. We will miss him greatly as our senator.”

Chuck Goddard, President and CEO, Marinette Marine Corporation

companies – a change in policy requiring approval from Congress. Despite opposition from some senators who hoped to scuttle the entire program, Kohl rallied his colleagues to support the Navy’s decision. Today, the workers at Marinette Marine are building the backbone of our nation’s 21st Century fleet on the banks of the Menominee River – with costs coming down for each ship that comes off the line.

Through it all, Kohl stood up for service members, veterans, and their families. Although Kohl always looked for ways to trim the fat from the federal budget, he consistently supported funding for veterans’ health care, housing, education, job training, and retirement. In Wisconsin, Kohl championed the expansion of VA medical facilities throughout the state – making sure veterans could access the health care they earned. He secured new outpatient clinics in Union Grove, Rhineland, and Wausau; Vet Centers in Brown County, Wausau, and La Crosse; increased counseling services at the existing facilities in Milwaukee, Madison, and Green Bay; and a new spinal cord injury center at Milwaukee’s Zablocki VA Medical Center.

“This is more than a new building. It represents hope for veterans fighting every day to overcome disability and paralysis. It represents progress in how we treat spinal cord injuries. And it represents the sacred commitment of Americans everywhere to keep faith with those who fought for our freedom.”

**Senator Herb Kohl
Dedication of VA Spinal Cord Injury
Center in Milwaukee, WI
July 29, 2011**

Early on in his career, Kohl took on the sensitive task of investigating the whereabouts of troops from previous wars who were missing in action and the reports that some were still held as prisoners of war. He carried out this work as a member of the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs. The committee found new evidence that helped families learn the fate of their loved ones, and its work was a key step in improving American relations with Russia and Vietnam. When the committee was disbanded, Kohl presciently stated that, "I think there are places in government that may be better equipped to continue this work." Today, the military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command works every day to account for missing troops and help their families find closure.

Later in his career, Kohl learned about hundreds of soldiers who were prevented from using benefits they earned after serving overseas, and he immediately set about to find a solution. The soldiers had earned extra days of paid leave, but they were not given this benefit because the government mistakenly deemed them ineligible when they came home after their deployment. Even after the mistake was corrected on the soldiers' records, the Army declared that the soldiers would only be allowed to use their leave if they went on another deployment - which many of them would never be able to do.

Many of these soldiers were members of the Wisconsin National Guard's 1157th

Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Fair Military Leave Act. This legislation fixes a problem that is preventing some of our brave service members from using benefits that they earned after serving multiple or extended deployments overseas.

In 2007, the military established the Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence Program, or PDMRA, to assist men and women who are ordered to deploy beyond the established standards for troop rotation by providing extra paid leave when they return home. Unfortunately, a mistake during demobilization prevented some soldiers from receiving the paid leave they earned. The Army's records indicate that this problem affects 577 soldiers across the country, including 80 in Wisconsin.

These soldiers have since gotten their military records corrected to reflect the days of PDMRA leave they were supposed to receive. However, the only way for these soldiers to use this benefit is to take extra paid leave on a future deployment. For those soldiers who will not deploy again or who have left the military entirely, this remedy does not work.

Mistakes happen, but they need to be fixed. The Fair Military Leave Act gives troops the option of cashing out the leave they were incorrectly denied when they came home. This solution is modeled after legislation Congress passed in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010. As with that bill, the Fair Military Leave Act reimburses soldiers at a rate of \$200 per day of PDMRA that they were incorrectly denied.

I am pleased to have the senior Senator from Oregon join me as an original cosponsor of this legislation. My friend from Oregon led the effort to fix the earlier problem with PDMRA benefits in the 2010 defense authorization.

The men and women of our Armed Forces have done so much for our country, and we should not drag our feet in making this right. These troops earned their PDMRA benefit, and they should be allowed to use it.

Senator Herb Kohl
February 1, 2012

Transportation Company, based in Oshkosh, and Kohl was determined to make things right for them. "Not letting soldiers use a benefit that we know they earned was inexcusable," Kohl remembers. "This was government bureaucracy at its worst. The Army added the leave to the soldiers' records, but tied it up in so much red tape that most of the soldiers would never be allowed to use it."

Kohl offered a simple solution: let the soldiers cash out their leave. His first attempt to get this done was opposed by the Army, who stuck by their interpretation of the rules for the leave. But the next year, Kohl rallied bipartisan support in both the House and Senate for his solution, in legislation he called the *Fair Military Leave Act*, and convinced the Army to drop their opposition.

In one of his final acts as a senator, Kohl achieved unanimous support from his colleagues to amend a larger defense bill to include his proposal to let the soldiers cash out their leave. His colleagues in the House, led by Wisconsin Congressmen Ron Kind and Tom Petri, had done the same in the House version of the defense bill – ensuring that the provision would be included in the final bill signed into law by President Barack Obama.

The world changed dramatically in the 24 years that Herb Kohl served in the United States Senate. The fall of the Berlin Wall heralded the end of the Cold War, while the attacks of September 11, 2001 began a renewed struggle against terrorism. Kohl brought an open mind and Wisconsin's common sense to confront the nation's toughest security challenges. Through it all, he never wavered in his commitment to support the men and women who keep our country safe.