

TRIBUTE TO JODY HERNANDEZ

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in the midst of all our other business, I would like to just pause and take a moment to recognize the outstanding work of Jody Hernandez, who left us yesterday after 16 years of dedicated Senate service. Jody came to Washington, by way of San Antonio, after graduating from Vanderbilt University. Over the years, she has lent her talents to the Republican Policy Committee, the Budget Committee, and with Senator Don Nickles on and off the Hill. David Schiappa convinced her to come back to the Senate in 2005, and she has been an indispensable part of the Senate floor team ever since. Whenever any of us had a question, she had the answer. She has been a friendly and welcoming presence in the cloakroom, regardless of how long her day was. She has been a tremendous help to every one of us. And we will all miss her. But we are all delighted that she has found her partner in life, and we wish her and her new husband, LCDR Glenn Wright, U.S. Navy, many years of happiness and every success as they begin their life together. Jody and Glenn met on a church trip to Israel in October and recently tied the knot. So I am sure many adventures lie ahead. We thank her for her good cheer, her professionalism, and her service.

RECOGNIZING THE ALLY FOUNDATION

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today to honor The ALLY Foundation, an inspirational organization in Massachusetts. In the summer of 2002, a young woman named Alexandra "Ally" Zapp walked into a fast food restaurant's restroom in Massachusetts and was brutally murdered.

Soon after Ally's death, her parents learned that the man who killed Ally was not just an employee of the restaurant but an extremely dangerous sexual predator with 24 previous criminal convictions, including rape and kidnapping.

Ally's mother, Andrea Casanova, and stepfather, Steven Stiles, turned their anger to resolve and their sadness to hope and founded The ALLY Foundation. The ALLY Foundation is dedicated to changing the way our society deals with sexual predators and educating policymakers, employers, and the general public on sexual violence. Their work initially involved learning all they could about sexual violence, poring over research, attending conferences, and interviewing dozens of experts. Andrea soon became an expert herself and a compelling presence at sex offender management conferences.

Andrea and Steve's tireless research confirms that current criminal statutes and incarceration guidelines as they pertain to sexual violence often go unenforced and are at best incon-

sistent. There are an estimated 600,000 sex offenders in the country and authorities have not accounted for as many as 100,000 offenders.

The ALLY Foundation does more than merely raise awareness of a problem; they're helping to solve it. Within 2 years of Ally's murder, The ALLY Foundation had already made a significant impact on public policy, including helping to pass Massachusetts's sexually dangerous commitment law—known as the Ally Zapp Law—to keep sex offenders predators off the street after they complete their criminal sentence.

Ally's tragic death and countless other attacks were the result of a legal system largely unequipped to handle the unique dynamics of sexual predation. Ally's killer should never have been free, let alone work around the general public.

In less than a decade, The ALLY Foundation has had a profound impact on public policy. It is impossible to know how many lives have been saved or how many were spared the physical and emotional scars of sexual abuse and violence. But the fact remains that thanks to The ALLY Foundation, public officials and employers are far better educated and equipped to enact laws and adjust policies to reflect the unique nature of sexual violence. I commend Andrea and Steve for all they do.

ROONEY NOMINATION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in March, I was compelled to place a hold on the nomination of Jo Ann Rooney to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, when I was not satisfied that the military had properly investigated the mistreatment of some members of the Oregon National Guard who were demobilizing at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, JBLM.

I am pleased to say that today I am lifting that hold.

I have had meetings and exchanged letters with Secretary of the Army John McHugh, Army Vice Chief of Staff General Peter Chiarelli, Major General Philip Volpe, Jo Ann Rooney, and Dr. Clifford Stanley, who will be Dr. Rooney's supervisor if she is confirmed. I have also received several documents related to the investigations, and written answers to more than 60 questions about the investigations.

I am satisfied that the actions taken by the Army put them on the right path to ensuring that future National Guard soldiers receive all of the care and benefits to which they are entitled.

I will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the changes the Army is making. However, I believe that Dr. Rooney would, if confirmed, work to ensure that all servicemem-

bers get appropriate medical care, and improve the demobilization process.

I would urge the Senate to quickly and positively act on Dr. Rooney's nomination.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS J. PAMPERIN

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment today to recognize the long and distinguished career of Mr. Thomas J. Pamperin of the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA. After nearly four decades of public service, beginning with the U.S. Army and now as the VA's Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance, Tom is retiring. From his days as a VA claims examiner in Milwaukee to his present leadership position, he has ably served our Nation's veterans.

Tom has earned an excellent reputation with Members of Congress and their staff, especially with that of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, of which I was proud to serve as chairman during the 109th and 110th Congresses. He also receives high praise from leaders of veterans service organizations, the Department of Defense, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Justice. He has represented the VA with distinction before the Congress, other Federal agencies, and foreign delegations.

During my chairmanship of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Tom was the "go to person" for matters of critical importance to veterans, especially those seeking compensation for their war wounds. When time was of the essence, he cut through the red tape and personally saw to it that the veteran got the benefits that were due. More broadly, he has led efforts to improve the delivery of benefits to all veterans, including initiatives to ease the burden of proof for those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, to enable veterans to begin the claims process before discharge from military service, to better coordinate the delivery of military and VA benefits, and to automate claims for higher education benefits under the new G.I. bill.

In particular, I thank Tom for the work he did in improving VA's evaluation of and ratings for veterans with traumatic brain injuries, TBI. Soon after becoming chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I asked former VA Under Secretary for Benefits, Daniel L. Cooper, about limitations on TBI ratings to 10 percent "and no more." Tom played a significant role in VA's response: He developed temporary guidance so that VA could promptly address cases where the limitation should not be applied and developed final regulations to ensure more