

Please allow me, on behalf of the American people, to send my most respectful and admiring salute.

RETIREMENT OF SANDRA COOK

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to Sandra Cook who retired last week from the Department of Education. For almost 20 years, Sandra has worked in the Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs at the Department, providing invaluable and dedicated service. She will be missed by all who worked with her, both at the Department and in Congress.

Improving education for each and every child in this country is one of the most important priorities for our Nation, and Sandra has been committed to that priority throughout her dedicated service. Her commitment to education began in the classroom in Indiana as a teacher of history and language arts. She came to Washington to work in Congress and then moved to the Department of Education. From there she has provided constant guidance and support to us as we work to improve Federal education policy. She has been an indispensable part of the past two reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—the Improving America's Schools Act and the No Child Left Behind Act, as well as many other Federal education bills.

We all owe Sandra an immense debt of gratitude for her outstanding work. She knows the education laws inside and out, and she always goes the extra mile. She has always been able to work in a truly bipartisan way with Members of both parties. She doesn't just get the job done—she gets it done well, and with grace. We have been fortunate to have her.

As Sandra retires to Illinois, I know her colleagues at the Department of Education will miss her. Her knowledge and skills will be difficult to replace. Certainly, all of us in Congress and our staffs who have had the privilege of working with her will miss her assistance and support. I wish her a long and happy and healthy retirement. She has certainly earned it.

IN MEMORIAM: AUGUSTUS HAWKINS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am honored to remember former Member of the House of Representatives Augustus Hawkins, who passed away on November 10, 2007, at the age of 100.

Augustus Freeman Hawkins was the first African American from California to be elected to Congress. He was a champion of workers, fair housing, and civil rights, and Hawkins represented south Los Angeles, first in the State legislature and then in Congress, for more than half a century.

Augustus was born in Shreveport, LA, on Aug. 31, 1907, the youngest of five children of Nyanza and Hattie Hel-

ena Hawkins. His family arrived in Los Angeles soon after World War I when Hawkins was 11. He attended Jefferson High School and earned a degree from UCLA in 1931.

He began his public service career in an era that was far less congenial to minority politicians, serving as a State assemblyman from 1935 until 1962, when he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, as the civil rights movement was taking center stage. He served in the House from 1963 to 1991, and I was proud to serve with him.

While soft-spoken, Hawkins was fiery in defense of his constituents. At the time of the 1965 Watts riots in his district, he declared that police had been "abusive and arrogant and have attempted to control things by force, not by more modern methods of control."

When Hawkins retired at 83, he was widely praised for his unflagging legislative efforts to help bring those who had been left out of the system into the mainstream.

His legislative legacy includes a key role in shaping Federal statutes, most importantly as sponsor of the section of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act that created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Hawkins fought with President after President for minimum-wage increases and, with Senator Hubert Humphrey, wrote the Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1978 that was designed to reduce unemployment and inflation.

He is survived by two stepdaughters, Barbara A. Hammond and Brenda L. Stevenson; a stepson, Michael A. Taylor; two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Our Nation lost an amazing public servant and mentor with the passing of Augustus Freeman Hawkins, but his legacy to the people of south Los Angeles, the State of California, and all of America should be remembered.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

RUSSIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I commend Russian citizens for turning out in large numbers to vote in yesterday's parliamentary elections. For 16 years, Russia's citizens have exercised their right to vote, which is so essential to democracy.

Unfortunately, Russia's leaders have been working to make that vote more and more meaningless by creating an imitation democracy instead of a real one.

Well before the campaign even began, several Russian political parties and politicians were banned from participating in the election. During the campaign, President Putin and his party, United Russia, enjoyed virtually unlimited positive television air-time on Kremlin-controlled networks, while opposition parties had their ads removed and their campaign materials con-

fiscated. The Russian authorities have prevented opposition parties from campaigning fairly, imprisoning opposition leaders, intimidating activists, and preventing them from making their case to Russia's voters. Russian voters have reported that they have been pressured to vote for the Kremlin's party, United Russia, by employers and local officials. In Chechnya, 99.2 percent of voters allegedly turned out to vote and 99.3 percent of these voters allegedly cast their ballot for United Russia. Several other regions have reported similar results for Putin's party, making a mockery of this vote as a free and fair election. Yesterday's elections were the least free and fair in the 16 years of Russia's modern history as an independent country.

We have to work with the Russian leadership in the coming years to deal with vital foreign policy issues, including securing nuclear materials and preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons security is a high priority, and the United States and Russia need to work together to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons or materials.

But in doing so, we do not have to turn a blind eye to the erosion of Russian democracy. We must be clear-eyed on Russia's political direction, which in the long run is not favorable for Russia's own political stability or economic prosperity. By engaging Russia honestly, we will remain friends of the Russian people as they continue to try to build for themselves a better country and future.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING PATROL OFFICER JOHN PAUL MILLER

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of a dedicated public servant, Officer John Paul Miller of the California Highway Patrol. On the evening of November 16, 2007, while searching for a reported reckless drunk driver, Officer Miller's life was tragically cut short in the line of duty when his patrol vehicle struck a tree on a rural road near Livermore.

Officer Miller graduated from the California Highway Patrol Academy in March 2007 and joined the Dublin CHP office soon afterward. Officer Miller dutifully served the citizens and communities of Contra Costa County. Although his time in the uniform was all too short, Officer Miller demonstrated a passion for law enforcement and commitment to helping others, qualities that enabled him to become a respected member of the California Highway Patrol. Officer Miller's colleagues shall always remember him for his gregarious nature and devotion to serving the public.

Officer Miller is survived by his wife Stephanie and children, Chandler and Reese. When he was not on duty or

spending time with his beloved family, Officer Miller was an avid sportsman who enjoyed playing basketball, football, and golf. Officer John Paul Miller served the State of California with honor and distinction and fulfilled his oath as an officer of the law. His contributions to law enforcement and the many lives that he touched will serve as a shining example of his legacy.

We shall always be grateful for Officer Miller's service and the sacrifices he made while serving and protecting the people of California.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROSEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Roseville Fire Department in Roseville, CA.

In November 1907, a group of downtown merchants in the railroad community of Roseville came together and formed the Citizens Volunteer Fire Department after devastating fires destroyed and threatened many of their businesses. The department opened under the leadership of fire chief W.B. Musson, who was joined by assistant fire chief W.T. Butler and 16 volunteer firefighters to protect the town of approximately 6,000 residents.

When the city of Roseville was incorporated in 1909, the department was officially named the "Roseville Fire Department" and for over 50 years worked out of two fire stations and added a third in 1961. In 1947, after 40 years as a volunteer fire department, the Roseville Fire Department hired a full-time firefighting team to protect the rapidly growing city.

Today, the Roseville Fire Department has 130 employees serving over 100,000 residents with 8 fire stations, a 3-acre training facility, a technical rescue team, a hazardous materials team and emergency medical technicians at every fire station.

As the firefighters and community celebrate the Roseville Fire Department's centennial anniversary, I would like to congratulate and thank all of the brave men and women of the Roseville Fire Department who have proudly served their community over the past 100 years.●

REMEMBERING KENNETH THOMAS NOVEL

● Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of Kenneth Thomas Novel. Kenneth passed away after a battle with liver cancer on November 14 at his home in Gaithersburg, MD. He was 60 years of age.

Kenneth was born in New York City, NY, on January 30, 1947. He was a Vietnam veteran who served with the "Screaming Eagles" of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam in 1968. On November 20, Kenneth Novel was buried with full military honors at the Columbarium in Arlington National Cemetery.

Kenneth was an owner of O Salon in Georgetown along with his brother, Robert. His career spanned more than 38 years between Washington, DC and Aspen, CO.

Kenneth Novel was a devoted family man. He is survived by his loving wife Theresa; three children, Lisa Hackett, Simone and Anthony; two grandchildren, Jake and Luke; and two brothers, Gene and Robert Novel.

Lilibet and I, and all of Kenneth's friends, offer our prayers to Theresa and the Novel family. Kenneth was an American patriot who believed in his country and fought for his country. America owes him our thanks for his contributions and sacrifice. He will be missed by many of us.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. HIRAM WARD

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, this Friday, on December 7 in Murfreesboro, AR, the citizens of Pike County will gather together to honor Dr. Hiram Ward as the "2007 Country Doctor of the Year." He is receiving the award for coming out of retirement and saving the Pike County Memorial Hospital from closure. The award is sponsored by Staff Care, a medical staffing firm in Irving, TX, and is presented annually "to physicians who best exemplify the spirit, skill, and dedication of America's medical practitioners."

Since 1953, Dr. Ward has served the citizens of Murfreesboro and Pike County as a devoted physician and caregiver. Nearly 9 years ago, Dr. Ward, who just recently turned 82, went into "semi-retirement," only seeing patients occasionally.

However, when Pike County Memorial Hospital faced closure due to the loss of its staff physicians, Dr. Ward came out of retirement and resumed work full time to keep the hospital open. For the last 11 months, Dr. Ward has served as the chief of staff for Pike County Memorial and has been on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. His work has kept the hospital, which is the second largest employer in town employing 55 people, from permanent closure.

For the people of southwest Arkansas, Dr. Ward has been a constant both at birth and death. He has delivered babies for most of the families in the area and also sat at the bedsides of many people's parents and grandparents at the hour of their passing. His handiwork as a physician is visible on the countless individuals that he "stitched up" over the course of his career. He has set limbs, removed gall stones, and simply improved the condition of his patients by just talking to them. He has also saved many lives in Pike County.

He has been the family doctor for my State director, Donna Kay Yeargan, nearly all of her life. She told me that Dr. Ward saved the life of her father, Jetty Steel, many times over beginning in 1963 when Mr. Steel suffered injuries from a serious car accident. Dr. Ward treated him in the emergency

room before he was transported to another area hospital in Texarkana, AR. Years later, he discovered a heart problem in Mr. Steel and insisted that he receive a new heart valve.

In the years after Donna Kay's mother died, Dr. Ward would travel 20 miles down an old country road to Nashville, AR, every Saturday night to visit with Jetty and give him a quick medical check. But it was at the end of Mr. Steel's life that Dr. Ward showed how much he cared about his patients. During the 3 weeks Mr. Steel was in the hospital before his death in March 2006, Dr. Ward came to the hospital at least twice a day to just sit and visit with him.

He is a quiet and thoughtful man of few words, but he maintains a commonsense approach to health and medicine that has made him among the most trusted men in the region. His patients are not just patients, they are his neighbors, his friends, his extended family. It is obvious that he does more than attend to their medical needs; he cares for them and loves them like family.

Dr. Ward's life is medicine and keeping people healthy and active. He has always understood the value of treating the whole person. He gives each patient his undivided attention no matter how busy he is. There is a big difference between "medical attention" and "medical care." Perhaps the key to Dr. Ward's long and valuable service is that he understands that difference and that he really does care.

Most people would say that Dr. Ward has gone above and beyond the call of duty, but his friends doubt that he believes that.

Already this year, he has been featured in the July 2007 edition of "Reader's Digest" in the Grassroots column for his dedication to the people of Pike County and for coming out of retirement to keep the hospital open.

So, Mr. President, I congratulate Dr. Ward. The State of Arkansas is very proud of his achievements and happy that Dr. Ward is receiving this well-deserved recognition. Although Dr. Ward will take this in stride and quietly accept the accolades, his true reward comes from the work he has done and continues to do for his community.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations, a withdrawal, and a treaty which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)