

During the past few weeks, the Washington Post has reported in scrupulous detail the dire and startling conditions at recuperation facilities used by Walter Reed Army Medical Center—the very facility replete with moldy walls, broken elevators, bug infestation, a lack of support programs, and general disrepair. These confines are not even habitable, not to mention acceptable, in any way, shape or form for the provision of health care to America's finest. Above all, such degrading medical quarters ultimately send the wrong message to our troops who have risked their lives in defense of our country that somehow they are fit and capable enough to serve us but not enough for us to serve them. Although the Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital has remained the preeminent health facility for wounded and recovering service members ever since the admittance of its first patients on May 1, 1909, these recent news reports have uncovered blatant defects in U.S. military health facilities that must be fixed immediately.

In order to ensure that these stalwart Americans receive the treatment they have earned and that is unquestionably well deserved, this legislation will establish stringent standards for military outpatient housing, requiring that concomitant dormitories match the existing services standard for Active-Duty barracks, and mandating that all requests for repairs be completed within 15 days or alternate housing must be offered. Additionally, recent reports have revealed Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital's lack of support counseling to assist troops and their families in times of need. To alleviate these concerns, our legislation will require an emergency medical technician, EMT, and a crisis counselor at all outpatient residences, while creating an inspection team to ensure that high-level military officials are aware of all problems occurring at medical facilities, including those related to personnel and maintenance.

Furthermore, the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act will help solve recent problems regarding the overwhelming workloads for military caseworkers, which have, unfortunately, left countless service members helpless. This legislation will not only increase the number of caseworkers at military outpatient facilities but will establish an interim ratio of one caseworker and one supervising noncommissioned officer for each 20 recovering service members, while requiring staff training for the identification of mental illness and suicide prevention.

This legislation will also address the processing delays for troops who seek a determination for their military status and disability level, which on average, takes as long as 7 months. This legislation would bring the Physical Disability Evaluation System under one command in order to reduce lengthy bureaucratic delays that have left even the most severely injured service mem-

bers without a health determination for unnecessary lengths of time.

Family members also carry a large burden for the sacrifices made by their loved ones in uniform. In order to ease the burdens of the health care process for these families, our legislation creates two 24-hour crisis counseling and family assistance hotlines and requires the creation of a single manual for outpatient care procedures, which will allow families to access all of the information they need to help care for their loved one. Sadly, family members are often forced to decide between attending to their loved one or keeping their job—a decision that no family member of our courageous troops should ever have to make. Therefore, this legislation provides Federal protections for the jobs of family members who are caring for a recovering service member, while extending medical care to family members who are living at military treatment facilities.

And finally, one of the underlying concerns of the revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital was the lack of accountability and oversight at a facility which houses thousands of heroic Americans. This legislation would create a Wounded Warrior Oversight Board appointed by congressional leadership who will supervise the implementation of this legislation's provisions and serve as an advocate for all recovering service members in the future.

The obligation of this country to its veterans is sacred and solemn and one that must be fulfilled every day. We should strive to put into action the words of President Lincoln that we must "care for him who shall have borne the battle . . ." Since the attacks of September 11, millions of valorous American men and women have fearlessly and honorably answered the call to service. Congress must now do its duty and everything in its power to vigorously extend the finest medical treatment and care possible to troops upon their return—attention that is worthy of their tremendous and immeasurable contributions to us all.

Once again, I am pleased to join Senators OBAMA and MCCASKILL in introducing the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act because I believe it is crucial for Congress to provide our Nation's veterans with a guarantee that they will never have to worry about dilapidated living conditions in military hospitals ever again, and I urge my colleagues to voice their support.

TRIBUTE TO DAN CREGER

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a hard working, respected young man, Mr. Dan Creger. Dan is from Casper, WY, and has proven that in spite of his disabilities, one man can have a great impact.

Dan was born with arthrogryposis, a condition that causes multiple joint problems and limits the range of motion of a joint. As a result of this dis-

ease, Dan has spent most of his life in a wheelchair. Despite his disability, Dan refuses to be held back, relying not on public assistance but rather on his determined spirit and the support of friends and family to achieve his daily successes.

Dan worked for the Bureau of Land Management for 20 years. Recently the BLM honored his service by presenting him with the Honor Award for Superior Service. Casper Field Office Manger, Jim Murkin said, "Dan is a Go to Guy! He is someone who you can depend on to get a job done. He always wants to stay busy. He hates doing nothing. He is a great asset to the BLM."

Four years ago Dan began working at the National Historical Interpretive Trails Center in Casper. The director of the center, Jude Carino, says that Dan "always has a smile. He always has good things to say about people, and he doesn't complain." At the center Dan greets visitors, answers questions and leads tours for schools and other organized groups. In 2006 he assisted 8,000 visitors, and guided nearly 2,000 schoolchildren through the facility.

A volunteer for the National Historical Interpretive Trails Center said, "I have learned a lot from Dan in how to guide guests through the center. He is a wealth of knowledge and has a great sense of humor."

Dan's life was thrown another curve when last summer he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. But through it all he continues to have a positive attitude. Dan said that when he was first told about the cancer he felt both sadness and anger, but soon he decided that this was just another challenge for him to deal with. He said, "I've tried to go on with my life and take it day by day."

A friend of Mr. Creger summed it up best when he said, "In my eyes, Dan is a man of courage that stands 6 feet tall. He lives his life as any productive member of society and pushes aside any thought of pity for himself. He doesn't let his physical limits or the threat of cancer keep him from achieving his goals in life. In this way, Dan is better than many men who face lesser challenges in life. I am proud to know Dan and be his friend."

It is obvious that Dan is a good, hard-working man who refuses to let life's challenges stand in his way. Dan Creger is an inspiration to all of us, and I am honored to share his story.

HONORING EARL B. OLSON

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, we take this floor at different times for different reasons, to debate bills and talk about the condition of our country and its future. At times, we tend to exaggerate the importance of the laws we pass to the progress of our society. I say that because there is no law to make people do the most important things: love their families, sacrifice for their communities, or create a legacy that will last for generations.

Today I rise to honor a great man who did those things and changed life on the Minnesota prairie for thousands of people who maybe never even heard his name. Today I want to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Earl B. Olson, an innovator for Minnesota agriculture, a leader in the Nation's turkey industry, and a man of great faith.

There is a passage in the Book of Isaiah that truly captures his life. In the midst of difficult times for Israel, it talks about a future day of blessing when God will:

... bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

If ever there was an "oak of righteousness," it was Earl Olson, who brought beauty, gladness, and praise to the hearts of many.

Earl Olson founded the Jennie-O Turkey Store in 1949. At that time, the Minnesota turkey industry was a tiny fraction of what it is today. Currently, Jennie-O is the largest turkey company in the United States, with Minnesota leading the Nation in turkey production.

Born on May 8, 1915, Earl was the son of Swedish immigrants. He grew up on a farm outside of Murdock, MN, and attended the West Central School of Agriculture in Morris, MN, graduating in 1932.

Earl's first job, at the age of 17, was at the Murdock Cooperative Creamery. Within 1 year, he became the manager of Swift Falls Creamery.

As the story has been told, one day a woman came into the Swift Falls Creamery to purchase some ice. As Earl was chopping away at a small block of ice, another employee spilled 100 gallons of scalding hot water on him, burning much of his body and sending him to the hospital. Fortunately, the company had health insurance and Earl was compensated with \$1,000. With this money, Earl began his empire by purchasing 300 turkeys. After earning a dollar for each turkey, Earl soon began purchasing more. Fifteen years later, Earl found himself selling a half million turkeys annually. By 1970, Jennie-O turkeys were being sold across the entire Nation. Earl B. Olson saw the impossible as an opportunity; he turned a tragedy into a success.

Faith was always a central part in the life of Earl Olson. When Earl was young, he and his family were founding members of the Bethesda Lutheran Church. Earl was later a member of Vinje Lutheran Church and helped lead the church's efforts in building a new facility. Throughout his life, his generosity helped countless troubled youth and prison inmates find their path to a better life. He always found time and resources to help people in their time of need.

Earl undertook many leading roles in the turkey industry. He served as the

president of the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association, director of the National Turkey Federation, and director of the National Poultry and Egg Association.

This past spring, I was privileged to have lunch with Earl. Even at the age of 90, I found him sharp and forward-looking. We had an engaging conversation about the future of the Minnesota turkey industry and the health of the Minnesota agricultural economy. It was an inspiration to still see the passion in his heart.

Today, Jennie-O Turkey employs nearly 7,000 people and creates more than 1,500 products. Minnesota has been truly blessed to have a visionary leader like Earl B. Olson live in Minnesota and work to make our State a better place.

America has many assets: abundant natural resources, good systems of health and education, and a great democratic tradition of the rule of law. We can never forget though, that part of our greatness comes from the "oaks of righteousness" among us. I am thankful to have known one: Earl B. Olson, who helped make Minnesota great.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN MEMORY OF DEANNE STONE

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today I speak to the memory of Deanne Stone of Framingham, MA, a dear friend of mine who passed away on Sunday, February 4, at the age of 67. I am deeply saddened by Deanne's death and will keep her friends and family in my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Those of us who were lucky enough to know Deanne could not help but be touched by her kind and generous spirit. Throughout the town of Framingham, where she lived for 46 years after marrying her husband Harvey, she was known for being willing to help anyone who asked. Mr. Stone recently told the Boston Globe that one young man recently approached him to tell him that whenever he needed help with a school project, he knew that Mrs. Stone would be the best person to whom to go.

In addition to always being willing to help her friends and neighbors, Deanne was also involved with many philanthropic efforts. Deeply inspired by her Jewish faith, Deanne believed in the power of individuals to make a difference through community service. To this end, she worked for numerous charitable organizations, developing a reputation as a dedicated and prodigious fundraiser. Throughout her career, Deanne worked for both the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston and B'nai B'rith International, for which she served as regional director for New England.

Deanne was also deeply involved with various educational organizations. She

worked with both the Maimonides Jewish Day School in Brookline, MA, and the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. She also worked with the Foundation for Children's Books, a Boston-based organization dedicated to promoting literacy among young children in the hope of instilling in them a love of reading and learning. Deanne was inspired to get involved with this organization while visiting schools in Roxbury, MA. Deanne would interact with the students, be amazed at how intelligent they all were, and wondered why many of them were not succeeding in the classroom. She believed that if these young people could be taught to love reading at the earliest age possible, they might gain a sense of discovery that would inspire them to achieve academically.

Such a dedication toward education is not surprising, coming from someone who was as dedicated a student as Deanne. While attending Weaver High School in Hartford, CT, where she was born and raised, Deanne was involved in numerous extracurricular activities, including a stint as editor of the high school's newspaper. Even with so much on her plate, she was still valedictorian of her high school class in 1957. Five years later, she graduated from the prestigious Brandeis University.

Mr. President, when looking back at the life of a person as warm and altruistic as Deanne Stone, who affected so many people in such a positive way, it is excruciatingly difficult to find the words to sum it up, while also doing Deanne justice. Be that as it may, I believe Deanne's sister, Barbara Gordon, another dear friend of mine, put it best when she wrote in a letter that was read aloud at Deanne's funeral that "The world will be emptier without my sister Deanne, but the world is a better place for her having been in it for 67 years!" I couldn't have put it better myself.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 556. An act to ensure national security while promoting foreign investment and the creation and maintenance of jobs, to reform the process by which such investments are examined for any effect they may have on national security, to establish the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 52. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of American Heart Month.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 12:12 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by