

Sen. Kennedy was never afraid to work across the aisle to get things done. We can all learn from the example he set and work together to build a stronger nation.—Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)

Today, America mourns the death of Sen. Ted Kennedy. He was one of the most dynamic and influential legislators in our Nation's history, and his legacy will live on in the work of the colleagues he inspired, and in the lives of the millions of Americans for whom his passion for social justice made a difference. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends; even though this day was anticipated, I am sure that little can soften the blow. Throughout his final illness, Sen. Kennedy was privileged to have the best doctors and the best treatment. But he never forgot, in this as in all cases, those who were not similarly privileged: those waiting hours in emergency rooms this morning for a doctor's care; those who went to sleep last night unsure that they were covered, uncertain that their families could cope with the financial burden of an illness. For their sake, health care reform was the cause of Ted Kennedy's life. For their sake, and his, it must be the cause of ours.—House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

I have known Ted Kennedy for more than 47 years. In that time, it has been my greatest pleasure to work with him in the Congress to try to tackle many human problems, but I am especially gratified by his contributions to the cause of civil rights and voting rights.

At some of the most tragic and difficult moments in this nation's history, Ted Kennedy gathered his strength and led us toward a more hopeful future. As a nation and as a people, he encouraged us to build upon the inspirational leadership of his two brothers and use it to leave a legacy of social transformation that has left its mark on history.—Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.)

Sen. Kennedy devoted his entire life to public policy. At any point he could have accepted a life of leisure. Instead he carried on his family's commitment to public service.

The Senate will be a smaller and sadder place without his enthusiasm, his energy, and his persistent courage.—Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.)

The loss of Sen. Ted Kennedy is a sad event for America, and especially for Massachusetts. The last son of Rose Fitzgerald and Joseph Kennedy was granted a much longer life than his brothers, and he filled those years with endeavor and achievement that would have made them proud. In 1994, I joined the long list of those who ran against Ted and came up short. But he was the kind of man you could like even if he was your adversary. I came to admire Ted enormously for his charm and sense of humor—qualities all the more impressive in a man who had known so much loss and sorrow. I will always remember his great personal kindness, and the fighting spirit he brought to every cause he served and every challenge he faced. I was proud to know Ted Kennedy as a friend, and today my family and I mourn the passing of this big-hearted, unforgettable man.—Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney (R), who ran against Kennedy in 1994

I would like to extend our sympathies to the Kennedy family as we hear word about the passing of Sen. Ted Kennedy. He believed in our country and fought passionately for his convictions.—Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (R)

Maria and I are immensely saddened by the passing of Uncle Teddy. He was known to the

world as the Lion of the Senate, a champion of social justice, and a political icon.

Most importantly, he was the rock of our family: a loving husband, father, brother and uncle. He was a man of great faith and character.—California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) and wife Maria Shriver, a niece of Kennedy

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, just a month ago, I joined fellow Coloradans, my colleagues in the U.S. Congress, and others across the country to celebrate and acknowledge the many accomplishments and contributions of the Hispanic community in the United States and Colorado. I am particularly proud to highlight the long history of Hispanics in Colorado, as they established some of Colorado's oldest communities, irrigation systems, and earliest businesses. I am equally proud that this community continues to be a vibrant part of the fabric of our great State.

Throughout this month, my colleagues and I have been hard at work to move forward on many policy concerns that are vitally important to Colorado's Hispanic community. From the confirmation of America's first Latina Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor, to progress on health insurance reform, and continued support for efforts to create and save jobs, I have been working with the best interests of Colorado in mind. Still, there is much to be accomplished.

We must come together to find opportunities to improve the quality of life of all Coloradans. In doing so, it is important to keep in mind that certain populations, such as Latinos, are disproportionately affected by many of the challenges we face as a State and country. At a national level, Latinos face an unemployment rate that is 3 percent higher than the national rate. In Colorado, Latinos face a poverty rate that is 12 percent higher than the State's overall poverty rate. Latinos also face other challenges—40 percent of Hispanics in Colorado are uninsured, approximately 24 percent higher than the State average, according to a Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment report. Though these issues are not a concern for Latinos in Colorado alone, they undoubtedly raise heightened concerns for the Hispanic community, given these statistics.

These are just a few reasons I have continued to support and develop policies that provide both quality jobs and help reduce the costs of hard-working Coloradans. Most notably, we have made significant progress toward reforming our health insurance system so that it better meets the health needs of all Americans. Making our health system more efficient, fiscally manageable, and accessible is vitally important to making health insurance more affordable for Hispanic and non-Hispanic families alike.

As a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I

have also been working to develop new ways to help low-income and working families afford to make their homes more energy efficient. By improving access to energy-saving technology and making homes more energy efficient, families can reduce their energy costs, while helping to make our environment and communities better places to live. This is just one part of a new energy economy that can bring more jobs to our State.

We have had much to celebrate during this year's Hispanic Heritage Month, but we also have much to do, and I understand there are many more goals that we have yet to achieve. So while we have enjoyed the celebration of Hispanic heritage and the contributions Latinos make in our communities over the last month, I will continue my efforts to improve the quality of life for Coloradans of all backgrounds in every month of the year.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF POINTS OF LIGHT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I stand today to recognize and honor an extraordinary organization that began its important work 20 years ago, born from the words of a new President who was dedicated to engaging the American spirit of giving and service. The words of that President resonate even now: "I have spoken of a thousand points of light . . . a new engagement in the lives of others, a new activism, hands-on and involved that gets the job done." This 1989 speech given by President George H.W. Bush outlined the vision for the Points of Light Foundation, now merged with HandsOn Network as the Points of Light Institute, the largest volunteer network in the country.

This independent, nonpartisan organization has worked to encourage, recognize, and empower the spirit of volunteer service that is encoded in our Nation's cultural DNA and is, as President Bush stated, central to living a meaningful life.

Throughout our Nation's history, Americans have demonstrated their willingness to give back and to serve in their communities, even in the hardest of times. Last year alone, over 60 million Americans performed volunteer service in this country. I am proud that my home State of Utah had the highest volunteerism rate, with over 45 percent of adults volunteering in the State in 2008. All told, these volunteers contributed almost 162 million hours of service in a single year.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of joining with my good friend, the late Senator Ted Kennedy in sponsoring the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, a new law that expands volunteer opportunities for Americans of all ages. I know that the Points of Light Institute will be at the forefront in realizing the full potential of this important legislation, creating healthy communities by inspiring and equipping

willing Americans to do more of the heavy lifting in their communities as we all work to improve our Nation.

Mr. President, I once again commend the Points of Light Institute on this landmark anniversary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LAURA RHEA

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that today I honor and recognize more than 25 years of service by Laura Rhea to our great State of Arkansas. Laura has served the Arkansas Rice Depot with steadfast leadership as President and CEO, ensuring the organization remained a faith-based ministry and developing innovative solutions to ending hunger.

Hunger and poverty are not just global issues; they are so pervasive that we all have some experience with them in our local communities. Worldwide, three billion people, nearly half the world's population, live on merely \$2 per day. In our Nation alone, almost 36.2 million Americans struggle day in and day out to find adequate nutritious food. More than 12.4 million children live in households that are food insecure. According to the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, approximately 80 percent of supplemental nutrition assistance goes to households with children, many of them in working families, including military families.

In Arkansas, Laura Rhea has been making a difference to reduce those figures. Under her leadership, Arkansas Rice Depot has grown from a small hunger program that distributed only rice, to a comprehensive hunger agency that distributes almost 7 million pounds of food and supplies in Arkansas each year.

Laura grew up in North Little Rock. As a child she dreamed of becoming a missionary, but never dreamed that her mission field would be feeding hungry Arkansans. She is a certified volunteer manager and was recognized as a certified fund raising executive in 1995.

Laura developed Food for Kids, a backpack program serving over 600 schools in Arkansas, sending home backpacks of food to over 25,000 students who face food insecurity. This program has been recognized by the Wall Street Journal, CNN, and has been replicated in over 40 States.

Laura also developed Simple Pleasures, a gourmet gift shop that sells the Rice Depot line of soup and chili mixes. Proceeds from the gift shop are used to purchase food for Rice Depot's hunger relief efforts.

Faith is an important part of Laura's life. In 2003, Laura suffered a heat-stroke unloading a truck. Although she would continue to serve her life's mission from a wheelchair, she is not limited by her disability. She often quotes Psalms 37:11 to sum up her life, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."

And last but certainly not least, Laura's family—her husband Don, daughter Allison, and four grandchildren are not only inspirations for her but also stalwart supporters. In fact, her daughter Allison shares her mother's mission and has served the Rice Depot for the past 12 years. In addition, Laura's granddaughter worked there over the summer, bringing three generations of her family to the effort to wipe out hunger.

As you can see, Laura Rhea is a generous, compassionate, and dedicated individual. So as Rice Depot celebrates its 27th year of progress in finding sensible solutions to hunger in Arkansas, I salute The Rice Depot, its staff, the many volunteers, and especially Laura Rhea for their commitment to feeding those who hunger in Arkansas.●

TRIBUTE TO PARKER WESTBROOK

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, it is with Arkansas pride that today I honor one of the great sons of the Natural State, Parker Westbrook of Nashville, AR. On October 20, 2009, the Howard County Democratic Central Committee is sponsoring a dinner to honor his lifelong public service to Arkansas and his country.

The day after Christmas in 1948, Westbrook set out with newly elected Congressman Boyd Tackett of Nashville for Washington, DC. Over the course of the next 26 years, Parker served his home State in our Nation's Capital for four members of the Arkansas congressional delegation, most notably as a special assistant to U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright. In 1975, he returned to Arkansas and served as a special assistant to Governor David Pryor.

Although public service in government was a calling for much of Mr. Westbrook's life, his true passion was historic preservation. Westbrook was born in 1926 and was the third generation of the Westbrook-Parker families to live in the home of his maternal grandfather, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house and farmstead provided Parker with an early appreciation for historic preservation, and after leaving Washington in 1974, he set out on a course to help preserve Arkansas's cultural legacy.

While working for Governor Pryor, Westbrook was elected to the Pioneer Washington Foundation, Inc. Board, a private nonprofit group committed to preserving Historic Washington. Washington, AR, is home to the oldest continuous post office in Arkansas, established on February 23, 1820 shortly after Arkansas became a territory. In 1979, Westbrook became a full-time volunteer and restoration adviser. In 1980, he became the executive director and was elected president of the foundation in 1990. He continued in that role until May of this year.

In 1975, Westbrook was elected to the Historic Arkansas Museum Board of

Directors and has served that organization continuously for 34 years. For many years, he was chairman and now holds the title of chairman emeritus.

Westbrook was also appointed to the Arkansas State Review Board of the Historic Preservation Program in 1975. He was reappointed three times by Governor Bill Clinton and again by Governor Jim Guy Tucker and served as chairman for 4½ years.

In addition, Westbrook has served on a number of other Arkansas historic entities including the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, Department of Arkansas Heritage Advisory Board, the President William J. Clinton Birthplace Foundation, Corinth Cemetery Association in Howard County, Friends of the Carousel, and Main Street Arkansas Advisory Board.

He has been awarded the Arkansas Historical Association's Endowed History Award and was recognized in 1986 as Arkansas's Distinguished Citizen for his volunteer work.

In 1995, President Clinton recognized Westbrook's longstanding service to historic preservation and appointed him to the President's Council for Historic Preservation where he served until 2003.

In addition, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt twice appointed Parker to the National Park System Advisory Board where he served as chairman of the Committee on National Historic Landmarks.

As you can see, Parker Westbrook has a long and distinguished career serving his community, Arkansas, and our Nation.

As the Howard County Democratic Central Committee recognizes Mr. Westbrook's service, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation on behalf of all Arkansans for his devotion and commitment to public service throughout his life.●

275TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ of South Portland, ME, on the momentous occasion of its 275th anniversary. What a tremendous milestone and enduring testament to the church's centuries of spiritual leadership and goodwill.

Established in 1733, the church held its inaugural worship service in 1734 and has, through its steady growth and exemplary commitment to others, expanded its ministries, championed education for all, and engendered an abiding sense of fellowship for literally hundreds of years. Although the physical buildings of worship may have changed over time, the church's fundamental mission—to foster its congregation's spiritual life while offering outreach to others through words and actions—has not wavered.

Although this church's history and time-honored presence within the