

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Parliamentary inquiry: I did not understand the last unanimous consent request, that we were going to a nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I believe we are now on the glidepath to finishing the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. We have an order. If we can clear some of the further amendments that are listed for a vote, I know we will be able to do that. Some of these are being negotiated at this time. At least we have a way forward.

Our staffs have worked very diligently on this since we started this bill last Tuesday and, for various reasons, we are going to finish it tomorrow, a week later. We could not have done it without a lot of cooperation. I thank my distinguished colleague, the chairman of the subcommittee, Senator JOHNSON, and his staff: Christina Evans, Chad Schulken, and Andy Vanlandingham. My staff also has ably worked through these. When I was called away to Fort Hood, my chief clerk, Dennis Balkham, did a great job with the help of Ben Hammond in our office. I appreciate very much all the cooperation and the help we have had coming to this point.

I am pleased with our bill. I think we have a good bill that will do what all of us want, which is to assure that our veterans have the health care, the benefits, the needed outreach they should have for getting their benefits on a timely basis. This is one of the priorities we are funding in this bill. Secondly, of course, the military construction part of this bill is going to assure many quality-of-life improvements for our military personnel. Also, we will be building in faraway places where our troops are being housed right now. We want to give them every comfort we possibly can as they are fighting for our freedom.

I thank my colleagues and certainly appreciate that we are now moving toward final passage of this bill tomorrow. I appreciate all the cooperation we have had.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EL SALVADOR'S CHALLENGES

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, on November 16, 1989, six Jesuit Fathers, their housekeeper, and her daughter were brutally murdered by members of the Salvadoran Army. The Senate has passed a resolution remembering and honoring the lives and work of these individuals, and today, as we solemnly mark the 20th anniversary of this tragedy, I am struck by the enduring legacy of those who lived and taught their commitment to justice, human rights, and peace in the face of violence and oppression.

A New York Times article published on November 17, 1989, a day after their murders, remembered Father Ignacio Ellacuria Bescoetxea as a strong advocate for human rights and a key participant in successful negotiations for the release of the President's daughter in 1985. Father Ignacio Martín-Baró was "a gentle academic type, with an office overflowing with books, papers, everything," and the editor of a widely distributed scholarly journal. Father Segundo Montes worked to collect data on atrocities committed in El Salvador's war so that, some day, justice could be done and victims would not be forgotten. Father Amando López was a committed professor of theology and served the seminary as its rector. Father Juan Ramon Moreno was the assistant director of the university's chapel which also served as an auditorium for lectures making relevant church teachings to the situation in El Salvador. Father Joaquin López y López was the director in El Salvador of Fe y Alegria which organized primary schools for children in the poorest neighborhoods.

These men put their faith and academic expertise in philosophy, political science, sociology, economics, and theology to good use. They maintained a distinct hope for an El Salvador at peace, and a country that respected and protected the rights and well-being of all its people—including the very poorest. These teachers were invaluable educators not only for their students and fellow Salvadorans, but also for the global community, bringing international attention and awareness to the plight of those most deeply affected by the conflict in their country. Though tragic, their deaths, and those of their housekeeper, Julia Elba Ramos, and her daughter, Celina Mariset Ramos, helped bring about the negotiations that ultimately led to peace in 1992, and their work on human rights and social justice is continued today by many in El Salvador and around the world, including the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S.

The civil war is long over, and we witnessed a landmark for democracy this spring as El Salvador hosted its first transfer of power between political parties in a relatively peaceful and transparent election. The new government faces many challenges, including widespread poverty, crime, and gang violence, and the work of the six

priests remains just as important today—to address these great challenges, El Salvador must commit itself to the causes of education, justice, and human rights that they championed two decades ago.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for National Adoption Month and the efforts of those individuals who play a role in foster care and the adoption process.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 51,000 children are adopted in the United States of America each year. This is an encouraging figure and a strong testament to the efficacy of child welfare workers and foster care families around the country. However, this month also provides us with an opportunity to look at the more sobering side of this issue.

Currently, more than 130,000 children await adoption in the United States. This figure represents children who do not yet know the safety and security of loving parents or a home to call their own. This is a dilemma about which we must raise awareness and for which we must find solutions.

As a father myself, I can speak for the sacrifices that most parents willingly make for the well-being of their children. I therefore deeply admire and respect those who make these sacrifices for children who are not their own by birth by providing foster homes or by seeking to adopt.

Many adoptive parents have fought their way through significant obstacles in the legal process in order to adopt, and all have taken risks and made sacrifices in their own lives to create a family where none has been before.

The theme of this year's effort to raise awareness about the adoption of children and youth from foster care, "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent," should help serve as a reminder that, although many would-be adoptive parents feel unequal to the job, they have a great deal to offer these children.

There are many ways to adopt, whether through the public foster care system, domestic adoption through private agencies within the United States, or intercountry adoption, to name a few, and numerous adoption agencies and workers stand ready to assist in the process.

As a Senator, I have seen the statistics of those children for whom no home was made, for whom no parent stepped up to the hard but rewarding job of parenting, and while there are encouraging exceptions, figures make it very clear that society has found no replacement for a stable home and loving parents.

Thus, it is both for the sake of these children and for the welfare of our Nation that I encourage adoption as a way to enhance one's own life and the society in which we all live. As I have

said in the past, the act of adoption itself represents the value that Americans place on the worth of each human life, and it is throughout this particular month of the year that we take time to reaffirm this sacrificial and rewarding act.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

• Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I was not present for the votes on Senator COBURN's motion to commit H.R. 3082 to the Senate Committee on Appropriations and amendment No. 2757, which was also introduced by Senator COBURN. Had I been present, I would have voted nay on the motion to commit and voted yea in favor of amendment No. 2757.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING JUANITA HELMS

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to remember the life of an extraordinary resident from my home State of Alaska, Juanita Lou Helms. Ms. Helms passed away on November 7, 2009, in her hometown of Fairbanks. She was 68.

Ms. Helms was active in local community organizations, politics, and most importantly, was devoted to her husband, their four children, and grandchildren.

Juanita began her public service on the borough assembly in 1980, but she is most well known in the community for becoming the Fairbanks North Star Borough's first female mayor in 1985. During her two terms, Mayor Helms shepherded the Borough through difficult financial times. As an "open door" mayor and terrific listener, she inspired the trust needed to find common ground among her constituents.

Among her accomplishments was the construction of the community's convention center, improving air quality, and helping thaw the "ice curtain" by establishing a sister city relationship with Yakutsk in Eastern Russia.

Away from the political realm, Ms. Helms was involved in innumerable civic endeavors, especially parent-teacher groups in Fairbanks. She also held an assortment of jobs in the community from carhop to court clerk to rental property manager.

In her personal life Juanita was an avid dancer who was loved by her family and all who knew her. She and her husband Sam were devoted to their children Fawn, Selene, Ren, and Karisse. They were so deeply involved in their lives and those of their many grandchildren that the number of events they attended and participated in are virtually countless.

Juanita will be missed by her family, friends, and all of the people she touched in the State of Alaska.●

REMEMBERING ANNIE ASHENFELTER

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise today in remembrance of Annie

"Akkuluq" Ashenfelter. I am saddened to announce with her passing on October 8, 2009, the village of White Mountain and the great State of Alaska lost an elder of great cultural knowledge, wisdom, and language. The magnitude of this loss is better understood by recalling the immense contributions she gave her family, community, and region.

Annie was born in White Mountain on January 24, 1913. She spoke Inupiat as her first language and learned English when she went to school. She completed the third grade.

Annie lived a subsistence life, reliant on the land and its resources to sustain her family. Annie's steadfast connection to her Inupiat identity ensured her children, grandchildren and her many generations to follow would remain grounded in those same cultural roots and values. Annie loved to go camping and fishing, living off the land, spending 90 years of her life sharing this love with her family. She enjoyed preparing Native food and sharing what she had with others. Annie was a talented sewer, of both children's clothing and animal skins. She made all 10 of her children's clothing: pants, shirts, parkies, mukluks, and mittens.

Annie was a pillar of her community. She had strength of character, embodied knowledge of the land, and symbolized the resilience of the Inupiat people. Her kind heart has left a permanent mark on the lives of countless individuals. Annie was easy to laugh, had good memories, and enjoyed the simple things in life: getting up in the morning, having her morning cup of coffee, sitting at the window and observing life in White Mountain. Annie never had a bad word to say about anyone, ever. Even during the difficult times, she lived her life with grace, humor, love, strength, joy and understanding. Annie was a strong Fish River Inupiat woman.

Mr. President and colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Annie "Akkuluq" Ashenfelter, whose love and wisdom will forever be in the memories of those who loved and knew her.●

TRIBUTE TO EDEN SUTLEY

• Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor a very special Louisianian, Eden Sutley, who has served her State and Nation with great distinction. Eden is a Lafayette, LA, native who is currently a junior at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. Just like Louisiana's senior Senator, Eden Sutley is a proud member of the Delta Gamma Fraternity.

Winston Churchill, one of the great figures of World War II, once said: "We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give."

Eden Sutley may not know what she wants to do to earn a living after college, but her volunteer spirit and desire to give back to the "greatest genera-

tion" precisely highlights the sentiment to which Mr. Churchill refers.

At the urging of her father, 2 years ago Eden became involved with Louisiana HonorAir Program. This group, based in Eden's hometown of Lafayette, honors surviving World War II veterans by giving them an opportunity to see the Washington, DC, memorials dedicated to their service. After flying up from Louisiana, the veterans visit the World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Iwo Jima memorials and travel to Arlington National Cemetery.

Eden Sutley has played an important role during HonorAir's trips to Washington, DC. For each visit, Eden organizes about 40 of her sorority sisters to come out and assist these World War II heroes. They help by pushing wheelchairs, taking pictures, and handing out water as these Louisiana World War II veterans experience the Nation's Capital, many for the first time.

In all, Eden has recruited over 200 sorority sisters to lend a hand to our HonorAir veterans. They have volunteered on more than a dozen Saturdays since 2007, helping over 1,000 veterans. There have been seven different flights this year alone, including the last trip of the year, which occurred October 24.

Volunteering with HonorAir to assist the World War II veterans is so popular among her fellow Delta Gammass that some sisters come back to help out even after they have graduated. Eden has also inspired two other Louisianians, Terricia Soyombo and Brooke Oschner, who are also Delta Gammass at George Washington University, to become part of this effort. Through her role as Delta Gamma president at George Washington, Eden has been instrumental in getting other Greek organizations involved, as well.

Eden has demonstrated a passion for public service that serves as a model for college students across our great country. On behalf of Louisiana HonorAir and our entire State, I thank Eden for her leadership, for her willingness to give back, and for inspiring others to do the same.●

TRIBUTE TO LOUISIANA WWII VETERANS

• Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I am proud to honor a group of 97 World War II veterans from all over Louisiana who travelled to Washington, DC, on October 24 to visit the various memorials and monuments that recognize the sacrifices of our Nation's invaluable servicemembers.

Louisiana HonorAir, a group based in Lafayette, LA, sponsored this trip to the Nation's Capital. The organization is honoring surviving World War II Louisiana veterans by giving them an opportunity to see the memorials dedicated to their service. The veterans visited the World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iwo Jima memorials. They also travelled to Arlington National Cemetery.